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Women working in sport psychology : a feminist examination of women's career experiences

Emily Ann Roper
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Emily Ann Roper entitled "Women working in sport psychology : a feminist examination of women's career experiences." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Craig A. Wrisberg, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

To the Graduate Council:

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Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of the Graduate School

WOMEN WORKING IN SPORT PSYCHOLOGY:

A FEMINIST EXAMINATION OF WOMEN'S CAREER EXPERIENCES

A Dissertation

Presented for the Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Emily A. Roper

August, 2001

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,

Diane and Edward Roper

whose love and support surpasses all expectations.

I love you both so very much

and am grateful for

all that you have done and continue to do for me.

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Leslee Fisher, I am so grateful for all she has done for me over the past year. I can only hope that I will take many of her qualities with me into both my professional and personal life.

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ABSTRACT

In 1995, Gill examined women's place in the history and development of the field of sport psychology and noted the contributions of numerous notable women from physical education, psychology and motor learning. However, no research to date has explored women's experiences working in the field of sport psychology. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of professional women's experiences working in the field of sport psychology. More specifically, I qualitatively explored women's entrance into the field, any obstacles or barriers confronted throughout their career advancement, their alignment within feminism and feminist theory, and their future aspirations and goals as female professionals in the field of sport psychology. This study used a semi-structured interview guide format (Patton, 1990). Eight "professional" women working in the field of sport psychology were interviewed. Interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes. All of the co-participants were Caucasian, ranged in age from 39 to 52 years of age, had an average of 16 years as a "professional" and were employed in sport science academic programs. A thematic analysis of the data produced themes in the categories of: (a) entrance into the field of sport psychology, (b) the context of sport psychology, (c) women's status in sport psychology, (d) the feminist sport psychologist, and (e) supporting women in sport psychology. Each theme was discussed separately. Differences between co-participants were also noted regarding the extent to which various themes did or did not affect their experiences as well as the unique and individual approaches each used to contend with them.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Sport psychology is often defined as the scientific study of people and their behavior in sport contexts (Weinberg & Gould, 1995; Williams, 1998). As Weinberg and Gould (1995) point out, most research in sport psychology addresses two objectives: (1) to learn how psychological factors affect an individual's physical performance, and (2) to understand how participation in sport affects a person's psychological development, health, and well-being.

Sport psychologists study such varied issues as motivation, group dynamics, moral development, personality, psychological interventions, and confidence. In addition, sport psychologists serve many roles and often pursue varied careers, with the majority being involved in research, teaching, and/or consulting.

It is important to make a distinction between *academic* sport psychology and *applied s*port psychology. Academic sport psychology encompasses both teaching and research by professors and graduate students in programs of sport psychology. Applied sport psychology focuses more directly on the application of psychological skills by individuals who work directly with sport participants. While these distinctions are not black and white, certainly most sport psychologists are more oriented toward one or the other career orientations. While the field of sport psychology has witnessed a significant increase in the number of applied sport psychology consultants in recent years (Halliwell, 1990; Rotella, 1990; Waite & Pettit, 1993), the greater number of sport psychology

professionals are employed as researchers and professors in institutions of higher learning. This fact is not surprising considering that the field of sport psychology originated from the work of individuals who were professors in the departments of physical education and psychology.

To advance as a field, it is imperative that those in the field understand sport psychology's underlying foundations, assumptions, and biases. The awareness of the history of one's field allows individuals to better understand and place their work in the context of that field and use that understanding to move forward. What follows is the documented history of sport psychology as detailed in most major sport psychology textbooks and articles.

The History and Development of Sport Psychology

While early work in motor learning was a precursor to what is now referred to as sport psychology, it was the work of Norman Triplett, a psychologist from Indiana University and bicycle-racing enthusiast, that initially focused on a theme of physical activity that is at the heart of sport psychology - competition. In the late 1890's, in the "first technical publication" in sport psychology, Triplett examined cyclists' tendency to ride faster when they raced in groups than when they rode alone (Davis, Huss, & Becker, 1995; Mahoney & Suinn, 1986; Triplett, 1898). Then, in 1899, E.W. Scripture, a psychologist from Yale University, examined personality traits that he felt could be fostered through sport participation. About the same time, G.T.W. Patrick (1903) began examining the psychology of play and its distinction from sport and other formalized physical activity (Williams, 1998).

The person who is generally recognized as the "Father of American Sport Psychology," Coleman Griffith, conducted studies on a variety of factors pertaining to sport participation (Williams, 1998). These included the effects of physical exercise on rate of learning, the effect of emotions and anxiety on learning, the psychology of pep sessions, and the sleep patterns of athletes (Gould & Pick, 1995). Additionally, Griffith wrote two books, *Psychology of Coaching* in 1926 and *Psychology of Athletics* in 1928 - that are considered classics in the field. In addition to his research activities, Griffith corresponded with the legendary Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne regarding appropriate ways to motivate a team. Griffith also provided assistance to various other college and professional athletes and teams (Gould & Pick, 1995). In 1938, however, Griffith accepted a position outside of sport psychology signaling the end of an era in the field.

The 1960s brought about the re-birth of applied sport psychology and the creation of professional organizations. Two leading psychologists from San Jose State University, Bruce Ogilvie and Tom Tutko, through their book, *Problem Athletes and How to Handle Them* (1966), created considerable interest in the field of sport psychology. From their research examining athletes' personalities, Ogilvie and Tutko developed the Athlete Motivation Inventory, a paper-and-pencil test designed to measure athletes' motives for participating in sport. During their careers, Ogilvie and Tutko conducted a considerable amount of applied work with college and professional athletes and teams and contributed considerably to promoting public interest in the field (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Also, during the 1960s, the field witnessed an increase in the development of groups and organizations devoted to sport psychology research and practice. In 1965, Ferruccio Antonelli, an Italian psychiatrist, was elected the first president of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP), an organization that published the first journal devoted strictly to sport psychology, the *International Journal of Sport Psychology.* Then, in 1967, the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) held its first conference, hosting scholars from the fields of motor learning/motor control, motor development, and sport psychology (Williams, 1998).

During the early 1970s, the knowledge base in sport psychology was expanded by a flurry of experimental research. Research was conducted in a variety of areas, targeted many different populations, and was diverse in nature. However, by the late 1970's the attention of researchers moved toward cognitive explanations of behavior, focusing more closely on athletes' images and thought processes (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). And, in 1979, the *Journal of Sport Psychology*, renamed the *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* in 1988, was first published.

The 1980s were characterized by continued growth on both the research and applied fronts. In 1980, the U.S. Olympic Committee developed a sport psychology advisory board and, during the 1984 Olympic Games, American television coverage emphasized sport psychology. Then, in 1985 the U.S. Olympic Committee hired its first sport psychologist, Richard Suinn, a professor from Colorado State University. Later that same year, the first scholarly journal devoted to applied issues in sport psychology, *The*

Sport Psychologist, was published. And, in 1986, under the direction of John Silva - a professor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) was developed for the purpose of providing a forum to address applied issues in sport psychology and to promote the field to the general public.

The 1990's witnessed a continued growth in the field with increasing memberships in the various professional organizations and the formation of a sport psychology section within the American Psychological Association (APA Division 47). Also, in 1991, AAASP developed guidelines for sport psychologists that included minimum training and experience standards for those individuals who wished to obtain such a credential of a certified consultant. Throughout the 1990s - 2000, the number of certified consultants has grown, reaching a record high of 130 members (AAASP, 2000).

Women's Place in the History and Development of Sport Psychology

While available information on the history of the field of sport psychology offers one a general understanding of its past, several elements have received relatively little mention. For example, most sport psychology professionals and students would have a difficult time citing prominent women who have impacted the history and development of the field. In fact, as witnessed from the preceding section, most information devoted to the history of sport psychology (McCullagh, 1995; Weinberg & Gould, 1995; Williams, 1998) does not mention the roles women have played in the field's development.

An exception is a paper by Diane Gill (1995) (a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro) in which she specifically explores women's roles within

sport psychology and poses the following question: "Do women have a place in the history of sport psychology?" (p. 418). Gill argues that while women's role in the development and history of sport psychology is rarely discussed, women did play an "active and visible" role within the field. Gill further details the research endeavors of numerous notable females within the fields of psychology, physical education, and motor learning suggesting that, "Women have been invisible, have been neglected, have faced exclusionary practices, and have been misrepresented, but women have not been absent" (p. 420).

Examining the early foundations of sport psychology, one can find women and women's issues being researched and discussed. However, there appears to be a significant distinction between the acceptance of women's contributions in psychology versus physical education. While women in psychology faced discrimination and negativity towards their work, women in physical education made tremendous strides in developing separate forms of physical activity for women and girls (Gill, 1995; Safrit, 1979).

As in most fields, the early roots of psychology are male-dominated and generally depict women as invisible. It was not until the women's movement of the 1960s and 70s that the subdiscipline of the psychology of women grew rapidly under the influence of women such as Mary Calkins, Christine Ladd-Franklin, Margaret Washburn, and Leta Hollingworth. Despite formidable obstacles, each of these individuals conducted important research pertaining to women's issues. Even after completing Ph.D.

requirements, however, many of these women were unable to obtain positions within higher education and continued to face exclusionary practices (Gill, 1995).

During the late 1800's, physical activity for women was advocated at the college and university levels. In most cases, women's physical activity was offered as a standard part of women's education and development. Due to the fact that women's activity courses were developed by and for women only (with men participating in separate physical training, activities and facilities) female specialists in physical education were required to plan and conduct such programs (Gill, 1995).

From the late 1800's through the early 1900's many women argued that while men's athletics were becoming more competitive, women's athletics should downplay competition, prevent exploitation, remain athlete-centered, emphasize enjoyment, and promote activity for all participants rather than for an elite few. The prevailing view was that women may compete, but that this competition must not become highly intense and specialized (Gill, 1995). And so began the stereotypical association of masculinity with sport which continues to burden female athletes to this very day. In 1923, however, several presentations at the Conference on Athletics and Physical Education for Girls and Women were devoted to the importance of competition for women, representing a turning point for the anti-competition movement.

In the 1930's, women such as Ruth Glassow, Mabel Lee, and Anna Espenschade investigated issues dealing with the fundamentals of physical education, the conduct of physical education, and motor development in adolescence. For the most part, the majority of the work being conducted focused on philosophical issues and professional

practice, rather than on the scientific aspects of sport (Gill, 1995). While some believe that many of the women in this era of physical education did not directly influence the field of sport psychology, it is clear that these women served as role models who encouraged other women to enter the field of sport, a domain there-to-fore reserved for men (Gill, 1995).

In the 1960's, while the field of sport psychology was experiencing a tremendous growth in the volume of research being conducted, the majority of papers, conference presentations, and publications were male-dominated (Gill, 1995). As Gill (1995) suggests, many of the women in physical education were somewhat reluctant to depart from professional issues and teaching. A notable exception was Dorothy Harris who was possibly the first woman to adopt the scientific approach and establish herself as a player in the sport psychology research literature. Harris's biography indicates that she was the first woman president of the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) and the first recipient of a Fulbright Research Scholarship in sport psychology. In addition, Harris published numerous articles and books on such varied issues as stress, body image, gender roles, and imagery, and "battled for the respect, dignity, and equality of girls and women in sport" (Gill, 1995; p. 425).

In the early 1970's, Bardwick and Sherman published *The Psychology of Women* and *On the Psychology of Women*, respectively. In addition, two major psychology journals first appeared in 1975, *Sex Roles and Signs* (now two separate journals) and the *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. While many women in psychology made tremendous

contributions to the study of feminism and women's issues, they did not embrace the areas of sport and physical activity.

Perhaps the only woman in the field of psychology to contribute significantly to the literature in sport psychology was Carolyn Sherif, a psychologist at Pennsylvania State University. Her article, "Psychology Constructs Women," challenged the field to turn away from an overemphasis on internal dynamics to a more social and woman-oriented perspective (Gill, 1995). In fact, in 1972, Sherif presented a paper on the topic of females in the competition process at the first conference devoted to women in sport (Sherif, 1972) and subsequently served on the editorial board of several major sport psychology journals (Gill, 1995).

Also, during the 1970's the field of sport psychology witnessed a growth in the number of books written and edited by women. In 1972, Dorothy Harris edited the proceedings from the conference on women in sport, and in 1978, Carole Oglesby edited the first feminist book devoted strictly to women in sport. Each of these works was an important contribution to the field of sport psychology and to women's issues.

In the 1980s, as the field began to witness an increase in the numbers of women contributing to the area of sport and physical education, Margaret Safrit (1984) investigated the state of women in physical education by examining the percentages of female editors and authors, gender discrepancies in academic rank, salaries and hiring, and the overall representation of women in the scientific subdisciplines of physical education and sport (Safrit, 1979; 1984). The results of her research revealed that women were underrepresented in the highest levels of academia, generally produced less research

than their male counterparts, received less funding, and were oftentimes overlooked in new hirings (Safrit, 1984). Additionally, Safrit (1984) reported that many of the women in physical education were choosing careers outside academia. She also noted the disillusionment women had over the demands of higher education. Safrit further suggested that those women close to retirement opted to retire early, while those who were younger chose to pursue different career paths. The overall theme of Safrit's article seemed to be that the status of women faculty in physical education was characterized as "lonely and invisible."

Since the mid-1980s very little research has explored women's role in or contributions to the sport sciences (i.e., sport psychology, motor learning, sport sociology). Moreover, the research that has addressed women's representation and status has tended to focus on women's academic contributions (Gill, 1995). Therefore, little remains known of women's place in the history and development of applied sport psychology.

History and Development of Applied Sport Psychology Practice

The history and development of applied sport psychology practice has not received the same attention and documentation as academic sport psychology. The majority of papers have focused on organization developments and academic issues, with little attention directed towards the things consultants have actually been doing over the years (Simons & Andersen, 1995).

While the field of applied sport psychology has witnessed a significant growth in the number of sport psychology consultants working with athletes, coaches, and teams

(Gould, Tammen, Murphy, & May, 1989; Simon & Andersen, 1995; Straub & Hinman, 1992; Waite & Pettit, 1993), there appears to exist a gender bias with respect to the total population and experiences of practicing consultants (Roper, in press). The domain of applied sport psychology consists primarily of White, middle-class males (Andersen, Williams, Aldridge, & Taylor, 1997; Gill, 1994; Gould, Tammen, Murphy, & May, 1989; Lee & Rotella, 1991; Roper, 2000). However, there are a few studies that moderately characterize women's place in the applied domain.

In 1989, Gould, Tammen, Murphy, and May found that only 20% of sport psychology consultants working with US Olympic teams were female. In 1990, a special issue of *The Sport Psychologist* devoted to articles by consultants working with professional athletes cited no work by female consultants. In 1991, Henschen discussed his experiences as a male consultant and suggested that being a male sport psychology consultant may have enhanced his credibility with female athletes due to cultural norms and stereotypes that favor a masculine orientation to competitive sport. When Straub and Hinman (1992) surveyed professionals in the field and asked them to select the ten most influential North American sport psychologists during the 1980s, only one woman, Tara Scanlan, was identified. Simons and Andersen (1995) examined eleven sport psychology consultants' perceptions of the development of consulting practice in applied sport psychology. Of the eleven consultants selected, only two women, Gloria Balague and Kate Hays, were identified. In 1997, Andersen, Williams, Aldridge, and Taylor tracked the training and careers of graduate students in sport psychology for five years (1989 to 1994). Consistent with the previous work of Waite and Pettit (1993) which revealed that

males earned 33% more than their female counterparts, Andersen and colleagues found a discrepancy in the earnings of men and women at the masters and doctoral degree levels, with men earning higher salaries than women. While women's earnings seem to be showing some growth (Waite & Pettit, 1993), gender equity has still not fully arrived. As Andersen and colleagues suggests, "based on the data, it appears that males are more likely to earn higher incomes in athlete consulting work" (p. 334).

Summary

While considered relatively "young" compared to more traditional disciplines, the field of sport psychology has made tremendous strides over the past 100 years. Unfortunately, the documented history of sport psychology has generally focused on Caucasian, middle-class men (Gill, 1995, Gould, Tammen, Murphy, & May, 1989; Roper, in press). While the contributions of such individuals should not be diminished, additional research and exploration is needed to investigate the roles and impact of people and groups who have generally been underrepresented in the fields history, such as women and persons from varied cultural backgrounds. By gaining an increased understanding of the roles and experiences of "others," the field can move in the direction of an engendered and multicultural discipline that offers more of an opportunity for all interested and qualified individuals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of professional women working in the field of sport psychology. More specifically, I intended to explore the specific factors that stimulated women's entrance into the field,

their personal experiences working in the sport domain, any obstacles and/or barriers they faced throughout their career advancement, and their future aspirations and goals as female professionals working in the field of sport psychology. In order to achieve these objectives, I employed a semi-structured interview methodology.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were adopted.

Feminism - A philosophical perspective that seeks to understand and eliminate the oppression of women through theoretical development and practices directed towards social change (Costa & Guthrie, 1994; hooks, 1984).

Feminist Research - A form of investigation that brings women's experiences from marginalized status to the center, contextualizes sport and exercise experiences with an emphasis on social constraints and values, challenges assumptions of traditional scientific research and emphasizes alternative methodologies that incorporate a wider range of methods of inquiry and forms of knowledge (Hall, 1996; Krane, 1994).

Heterosexism - The belief and promotion of heterosexuality as the only acceptable and viable life option (Cahn, 1994; Griffin, 1998).

Homophobia - "The irrational fear and hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex." (Pharr, 1988, p. 1)

Patriarchy - "The manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general." (Lerner, 1986, p. 239).

Praxis - The unity between theory/research and practice. An acknowledgment that what occurs in academe should be directed at producing the kind of useful knowledge wanted and needed by those outside academe who are working for social change (Hall, 1996).

Sexism - "Starting from the traditional belief in the difference between the sexes, sexism embodies two core concepts: (a) men are more important and valuable than women; and (b) women exist for the pleasure and assistance of men" (Freeman, 1979, p. 561).

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made in reference to this study:

1. The co-participants would, to the best of their memory and ability, honestly answer those questions outlined in the Interview Guide (see Appendix A) as well as report additional perceptions and feelings about their experiences.

2. The qualitative method of semi-structured interviewing is a valid procedure for obtaining information about the personal experiences of people.

3. Society, and more particularly the sport domain, is patriarchal in nature. While I do not presume that each co-participant experienced oppression, discrimination, or marginalization, I conducted this study with the assumption that such patriarchy does exist within the sport domain.

4. As a feminist, I view women as a group who share a common, but varied oppression - varied in the sense that a variety of identities (i.e., race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability) intersect with one another.

5. I (the interviewer) would be able to adequately understand and convey the feelings and perceptions of the co-participants' experiences.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in the following ways:

1. The small number of co-participants was necessitated by the application of the semi-structured interview method designed to present each co-participant's experience in "thick" description. However, it is acknowledged that the results may not be generalizable to other female professionals working in sport psychology.

2. It was impossible to guarantee that each co-participant would respond honestly to the questions and issues presented.

3. Unfortunately, due to the primarily Caucasian racial make-up of sport psychology professionals, all of the co-participants were Caucasian.

4. Due to the co-participant requirements, the majority of the co-participants interviewed came out of the same era of training and academic backgrounds.

Scope of the Study

Due to the use of a qualitative method of analysis, neither the collected data nor the interpreted results can be generalized to the larger population. The focus of a limited number of individual experiences is intended to enhance portrayal of the co-participants by providing a detailed description of their experiences. While generalizations to other women working in sport psychology would be inappropriate, an attempt was made to determine the extent to which the experiences expressed by the co-participants in this study may be similar to those reported by other women working within sport psychology and related fields.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study emerges primarily from its representation of the uniqueness of the female professional working in sport psychology. This experience is considered to be exceptional because it exists within the patriarchal context of sport and academia. While research examining women in sport has made tremendous strides over the past 20 years, no sport psychology research has specifically explored professional women's work experiences.

Such information should be of particular relevance to female (and male) sport psychology professionals, in addition to those currently working toward careers in sport psychology. Moreover, it was anticipated that the "voices" of the co-participants in this study would speak to other women in the field of sport psychology with insights into various aspects of the field, its growth over the years, and shared experiences.

Finally, the information obtained from this study was examined solely for its uniqueness as an experience of the co-participants as women in order to understand and value such experiences without comparing or contrasting them with those of male professionals.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the extant literature regarding professional women working in sport psychology. In order to understand better the experiences and perceptions of the women being interviewed, the following four themes are addressed: (1) the patriarchal context within which these women work - sport, (2) feminism and its application to sport studies, (3) the culture of higher education and its impact on female academicians, and (4) the representation and status of women in sport psychology.

Sport as a Patriarchal Institution

Sport, as it currently exists, is a gendered organization in which men typically occupy the more powerful positions and women the less powerful ones (Coakley, 2001; Sage, 1998). Burton Nelson (1994) argues that sport is "a world where men are in charge and women are irrelevant at best" (p. 7). It is an environment in which women often acquire "token status" and are many times excluded from the power structure (Acosta & Carpenter, 2000; Hall, Cullen, & Slack, 1989). Sport is a field which has long been influenced and dominated by men (Coakley, 2001) and there is ample documentation of the continuing domination of men in positions of power (Acosta & Carpenter, 2000; Hall, Cullen & Slack, 1989).

Perhaps the simplest way to prove male domination in sport is by examining the disproportionate gender differences in sport participation. Although this gap may be

diminishing, sport remains largely dominated by men. Research suggests that males have considerably higher participation rates in organized competitive sport (Coakley, 2000; Therberge, 1994). While the Summer Olympic Games reveal a continued increase in female participation (10.5% in 1952, 20.6% in 1976, and 34% in 1996), women currently remain unequal to men in numbers of participants and in the number of events available (Coakley, 2001).

An examination of the administration and organization of sport further reveals that leadership positions have almost exclusively been held by men. When Title IX was enacted in 1972, more than 90% of women's teams were coached by women. In 2000, only 45.6% of women's teams were coached by female coaches. Of the 534 new coaching jobs available in the last two years, women were hired for only 107 of them (20%). Additionally, positions in the administration of professional sport remain almost exclusively male dominated (Coakley, 2001; Sage, 1998). The International Olympic Committee, possibly the most powerful administrative body in sport, is comprised of 103 men and 10 women. And, of the 14 new members recently nominated for the IOC, all were men (Wharton, 2000). Particularly within such bureaucratic and administrative positions, men have prevailed. As suggested by Jarvie and Maguire (1994), "whatever sphere of employment one might consider, the further up the bureaucracy of public or private office you look, the fewer women you will find" (p. 163).

Yet another aspect of male domination in sport is seen in the media coverage of women's sporting activity. Research suggests that while women are largely ignored in the televised media, when they are portrayed, they are often represented as sexualized

objects, comic relief, and/or "girls" as opposed to "women" (Lumpkins & Williams, 1991). While men are generally delineated as active, aggressive, and spontaneous, women are characteristically described as weak, passive and responsive (Duncan & Messner, 1998). This underrepresentation and devaluation of the female athlete suggests that women's sport experiences are unimportant and inappropriate or, at the very least, less important than those of men.

If sport is considered a male preserve, which one would have difficulty denying, then how might the masculine ethos of sport be reconciled with women's participation/roles within sport? One possible vehicle is feminist scholarship. In order to better understand the female experience in the world of sport, it is first essential to examine feminism in both theory and practice.

Feminism

The term feminism is difficult to define succinctly and means very different things to different people. There is no one school of feminist thought, but rather, as Messner and Sabo (1990) suggest, "a multifaceted mosaic of feminist visions and practices" (p. 1). bell hooks (1984) defined feminism as a movement to end sexist oppression. Other feminists believe feminism not only seeks to eliminate oppression, but does so through theoretical development and practices directed toward social change or what is commonly referred to as praxis (Faludi, 1991; Hall, 1996; Stanley, 1990). Feminists view gender - that is, the socially constructed category that defines and distinguishes females from males as a problem because it results in unequal relations between the sexes. As Messner and Sabo (1990) note, when examining the issue of gender, one must be particularly

careful not to make a distinction between a "male sex role" and "female sex role" which inadvertently legitimizes and normalizes dominant forms of masculinity and femininity while marginalizing others. In defining masculinity and femininity as separate entities, role theory ignores the extent to which gender is a dynamic relational process through which unequal power relations between men and women are constantly constructed and contested (Hall, 1996; Messner & Sabo, 1990).

Today, feminist scholarship prospers. Contrary to traditional research in the social sciences, feminist work centers on the study of relations between the sexes and considers gender a key dimension of overall identity and a determinant of behavior (Messner & Sabo, 1990). The feminist paradigm explores such issues as gender stereotyping and its influence on behavior, sex-based differences and patriarchal values, the relationship between sex inequality and institutional processes, and social change and cultural maintenance.

History of Feminism

Women's efforts to gain political, economic, and social equality in America dates back to the late-1700's. However, it was not until the mid-1800's that women's issues and demands became a prime topic of discussion and debate. Since that time, women clearly have made major legal, political, and social advances, especially in the past thirty years. In order to understand the current status of women in America, it is important to fully appreciate the activities of those who have gone before, learn what changes still need to occur, and be inspired to carry on the mission.

The First Wave of feminism, which represented the first large scale feminist movement, occurred in the mid-1800's and included the work of such suffragists as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. These women first helped abolish slavery, then they demanded the right to vote for all women. Then, in the mid-1900's came campaigning for birth control and abortion, dress reform, divorce reform, married women's property rights, prohibition of alcohol and prostitution, educational opportunities and economic power.

It was, however, during the Second Wave of feminism (1960's - 1990's), the heady days of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the founding of Ms. Magazine when Gloria Steinem and her sisters took to the streets and to the newsstands that women made significant social and political advances. These activists shepherded in abortion reform, equal pay, and credit legislation, and elevated consciousness of sexism as a tool of cultural and political oppression. Second wavers, now in their forties through seventies, are still active and run most of the institutions of the women's movement such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), women's studies departments, and Ms. Magazine (Baumgarder & Richards, 2000). The achievements of Second Wave feminists paved the road for the future and opened many fabulous doors for women to come.

The Third Wave of feminism is feminism's latest incarnation. Foremost, Third Wave feminists' aim is to be inclusive in an effort to combat the wrongs of Second Wave feminists, who were criticized for being almost exclusively white and middle-class (hooks, 1984). Third Wave feminism focuses on diversity and claims that all races, religions, sexual orientations, classes, and genders are welcome to celebrate feminism.

As Baumgardner and Richards (2000) suggest, Third Wave feminism is interested in acknowledging feminists, particularly those who are younger (late teens through their thirties), so that Generation X can become a visible movement and, further, a voting block of eighteen- to forty-year olds.

In addition to the many generations of feminists, there are also the various strands of feminism, including radical feminism, existential feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, postmodern feminism, liberal feminism, cultural feminism, and socialist feminism (Messner & Sabo, 1990). While overlap exists among the varying perspectives, conflict is also evident. Because feminism has historically accommodated multiple perspectives, it is important to examine the major paradigms, issues, and debates that have shaped feminism.

Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism is the major feminist paradigm in the United States. First-wave feminism was essentially a liberal movement in which equality with men was sought. For liberals, sexist discrimination is opposed through the argument that women are equal to men in their ability to reason and should therefore be allowed the same freedoms (Costa & Guthrie, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990). Liberal feminists believe in public law as an important change agent for private attitudes. They seek to repeal all laws that provide differential rights, opportunities and responsibilities for women and men.

While liberal feminism has much to celebrate, there also exists various problems and critiques of the liberal paradigm. The central criticism of liberal feminists is their focus on reforming rather than transforming the existing patriarchal structure. As radical

and socialist feminists argue, merely reforming the situation does not achieve gender equity.

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism argues that equal opportunity is impossible due to the inherently patriarchal structure of society. Radical feminists advocate the destruction of patriarchal ideologies and the abandonment of hierarchical, patriarchal institutions and relationships. As a result, some radical feminists exhort women to commit only to other women for political, physical, emotional, and economic support. Still others such as Mary Daly call for an exploration of new forms of "being in the world" (Daly, 1978) in which the creation of a world other than one of patriarchy is advocated (Mitchell & Oakley, 1986).

While radical feminists shed light upon the impact of patriarchy on the lives of women, many argue that radical feminism tends to generalize the female experience. More specifically, women of color, lesbians, and working-class women (many who are a part of this branch of feminism) criticize it for its "totalizing" nature (hooks, 1984).

Marxist Feminism

Marxist theory was formulated by Karl Marx in the mid-19th century. Marx argued that work was organized for the dominant members of society and resulted in class distinctions and exploitation. From a Marxist perspective, women cannot achieve equality based on the belief that those in power, namely men, have the power to define the criteria of excellence in their own best interests. Therefore, to actualize a just society, class distinctions must be eliminated (Costa & Guthrie, 1994).

Despite the benefits of adopting a Marxist perspective, many feminists critique Marxism for its primary emphasis on class rather than gender. Further, Marxists have not fully applied their theory and method to understanding the female experience and generally consider women's oppression less important than workers' oppression (Mitchell & Oakley, 1986).

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism emerged during the 1970's in hopes of merging radical and Marxist perspectives. Socialist feminists believe that women's oppression is rooted in both capitalism and male dominance. The socialist accepts the Marxist belief that gender differences are not biological givens, but rather are socially constructed and therefore changeable. Moreover, socialist feminists believe that women's oppression is the result of both capitalism and male domination (Birrell & Cole, 1994; Messner & Sabo, 1990). Therefore, the socialist feminist contends that freedom cannot be achieved without complete reconstruction of the society.

Postmodern Feminism

Postmodernists criticize any feminist theory that attempts to universalize the female experience. In particular, lesbians, women of color, and working class women have spearheaded critiques of feminist theory for its totalizing nature. bell hooks, an African American feminist, argues that patriarcal oppression is experienced differently by women of color because of differences resulting from race and class (hooks, 1984). As a result, postmodern feminists emphasize the many different stories women tell and take into consideration the complexity of oppression (Messner & Sabo, 1990).

While it is particularly important to define feminism and its various strands, it is also necessary to discuss feminist research and answer the following questions: (1) what constitutes feminist research?, and (2) why is feminist research important? .

Feminist Research

Feminist research places women's experiences and perceptions at the center of inquiry, based on the notion that both the physical and social sciences have not adequately incorporated women's experiences into the production of knowledge (Krane, 1994). To embrace feminism, therefore, is to place gender at the center of analysis, not on the periphery.

Feminist research aims to critique and transform the social and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind, by engaging in confrontation or even conflict (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggests, feminist research is best understood as an empowerment of individuals. Moreover, feminist work attempts to confront the injustices of a particular society or sphere within the society. Whereas traditional researchers view their role as providing description and interpretation, feminist researchers view the product of their work as a step towards political action (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994; Krane, 1994). As Horkheimer (1972) suggests, feminist researchers are never satisfied with merely increasing the knowledge base.

Participants in feminist research are regarded as the experts concerning their own experience. As Krane (1994) states, "to do feminist research is to acknowledge and embrace the experiences of females" (p. 398). Moreover, to merely identify discrimination and oppression against women, or speak out against it, does not in itself

constitute feminism because what is essential to the feminist perspective and analysis is to ask the question "why?" The goal of feminist research is not only to answer this question, but to also apply research findings in ways that enhance the experiences of women.

Hall (1996) proposes four basic criteria for feminist research: (1) it is free of sex-related and heterosexist bias, (2) it does not make assumptions or generalizations based on male models and subjects, (3) it does not propagate negative stereotypes about women, and (4) it is not patronizing. While most feminist work centers on these four basic criteria, each researcher situates her (or his) own feminist approach within a theoretical framework.

A defining assumption of feminism and feminist research is that "woman" is a necessary and valid category because all women share, by virtue of being a woman, a set of common experiences. These shared experiences derive from women's common experience of oppression. That is, "woman" is a socially and politically constructed category. However, to say that women share "experiences of oppression" is not to say that all women share the same experience. The social contexts within which different kinds of women live, work, struggle, and make sense of their lives differ widely across the world and between different groupings of women. Therefore, all women do not share one single reality. With this in mind, it is particularly important as a feminist researcher to recognize the limited focus of much feminist work which centers around college-educated, middle and upper class, Caucasian, heterosexual women. Central to this notion, it is important for feminist research to be diverse and take into consideration

issues of social justice such as race, class, sexual orientation, age, ability, and religion, and how each of these interacts with one's gender.

In an attempt to address the uniqueness of women's experiences, qualitative inquiry has emerged as the primary method of feminist research because of its emphasis on the individual experience. Applying the qualitative method to feminist research expands the dimensions of traditional research by questioning the role that male hegemony and patriarchy play in research practices and in the exclusion of women in society.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Considering that critical differences exist among feminists on the issue of epistemology (that is, the study of knowledge and its limits and validity), it is particularly important to discuss the epistemological assumptions underlying the present study. As previously mentioned, feminists place womens' experiences at the center of inquiry based on the notion that the social sciences have not adequately incorporated women's issues into the production of knowledge. Therefore, challenging these traditional epistemological assumptions is considered central to the feminist framework. And, in order to do so, various feminist approaches are recommended, including feminist empiricism, feminist postmodernism, feminist cultural studies, and feminist standpoint theory. For the purpose of this study, I chose to focus on feminist standpoint theory.

Feminist standpoint theory begins with the assumption that knowledge is socially situated (Harding, 1991) and that there are multiple "truths" emanating from the different sociopolitical situations faced by individuals. Thus, to interpret and understand these

experiences, it is essential to begin an analysis from the viewpoint of a particular social group. Standpoint theory examines the world from the experience and perspective of oppressed and marginalized people. Feminist standpoint epistemology asserts that oppressed groups, in this case women, are located in and live out their lives in structurally subordinate positions. Standpoint theorists argue that men's vision of reality is incomplete because men are most often involved in only certain kinds of activities and relegate activities they disdain to women (Costa & Guthrie, 1994). As a result, men can only know part of reality. Moreover, feminist standpoint theory suggests that individuals in oppressed and marginalized social groups "develop both an understanding of how the world operates from the perspective of the oppressor group(s) as well as the realities faced as a member of an oppressed group(s)" (Dewar, 1993; p. 219-220).

While feminist standpoint theory places women's experiences at the center of inquiry, it fails to recognize the complexity of oppression. As previously noted, the complexity of oppression is considered by attending to differences not only between women but within women. Therefore, in order to consider differences, postmodern feminists argue for multiple standpoint positions that take into consideration race, class, age, sexual orientation, and ability, and how each of these interacts with one's gender. While I (as the researcher) believe that women share common issues and standpoints, I also recognize the complexity of oppression and have chosen to employ a multiple feminist standpoint approach within this study (Dewar, 1993).

Feminist Praxis

An integral aspect of much feminist work is praxis, the need for unity between theory and practice (Hall, 1996). Praxis acknowledges that what occurs in academia must produce knowledge that is wanted and needed by those outside academia, particularly those working for social change. More specifically, feminist praxis is, as Hall (1996) states, "recognition of the continuing and shared feminist commitment to a political position in which 'knowledge' is not simply defined as 'what knowledge' but also as 'knowledge for,' and in this case for women" (p. 78).

Unfortunately, within sport feminism there is a noticeable gap between research/theory and practice (Messner & Sabo, 1990). There are thousands of sport participants (i.e., athletes, coaches, administrators, officials, educators, volunteers) working toward the betterment of women's sport and gender equity for whom theorizing and research is completely foreign. Hall (1996) further suggests that those in academia (whose focus is research) should be working hand in hand with those on the "front line." As Messner (1992) argues, it is important that both research and theory strive to serve the interests of those in need. And, for the feminist researcher, those individuals are women (and men, too) in the long run.

Feminist Sport Studies

Today, feminist scholarship is prospering and feminist writings are delving deeper into the study of relations between the sexes. Sport, however, has been particularly resistant to feminism and remains a highly conservative social institution. Not surprisingly, then, feminist analysis of sport has had a very short history. In fact, it is

quite difficult to pinpoint any consideration of sport in the mainstream feminist literature prior to 1980 (Messner & Sabo, 1990).

Despite the lack of recognition of gender issues in sport within the wider women's movement, by the late 1970s feminists in academia began to explore and critique sport as a "fundamentally sexist institution that is male dominated and masculine in orientation" (Messner & Sabo, 1990; p. 2). Feminist pioneers such as Dorothy Harris (1972), Ann Hall (1972, 1978, 1981), Susan Greendorfer (1974), Mary Duquin (1978, 1984), Susan Birrell (1978), and Carole Oglesby (1978) each paved the road for future feminists with their groundbreaking research and writings in the areas of women, gender, and sex inequality in sport (Messner & Sabo, 1990). Today, even more feminist sport scholars are exploring such issues and their impact on women and girls sport experiences (Birrell & Cole, 1993; Cahn, 1994; Griffin, 1998; Hall, 1996; Lenskyj, 1986; Messner & Sabo, 1990).

Interestingly, much critical feminist work in the sociology of sport has been influenced by standpoint theory. Again, standpoint theory places the experiences and perspectives of oppressed people at the center of analysis (Dewar, 1993). Although standpoint theory has contributed to sport knowledge and an understanding of women's experiences in sport, the women we have learned most about are privileged women (Caucasian, heterosexual, middle-upper class). Many scholars argue against standpoint theory for its totalizing nature. As Dewar (1993) argued, it is possible to think about women's oppression in ways that are integrative and that focus on gender without privileging it as the only or most important form of oppression in one's life. As Lorde

(1983) states, "the oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries, true, but that does not mean it is identical within those differences" (p. 97).

It is important to recognize that almost all feminist sport research is written from a sociological perspective. While many of the writings may touch upon psychosocial issues pertaining to the female athlete's experience, it is necessary to recognize and examine feminist work conducted by those who align themselves specifically within the field of sport psychology.

Feminist Sport Psychology

Within the field of sport psychology, very little feminist research has been conducted. While there is a significant amount of gender-related research, very rarely have sport psychology researchers integrated feminist perspectives and theories. As Lenskyj (1990) points out, there is a notable difference between research about women and "woman-centered" research, the latter being described as research concerned with empowering women as well as facilitating social relations between men and women.

While the female psychological experience is now recognized as a distinct entity worthy of examination and discussion, it is important to note that most gender research in sport psychology is descriptive in nature and often fails to critically explore and challenge important issues and findings. Moreover, gender is rarely the primary focus of a study. In fact, it is often a secondary question used to broaden the depth of an existing study or to explain "discrepancies" in the data.

When examining the status of feminist research in sport psychology, it is first necessary to make a distinction between categorical and relational research. Categorical

research is research with a specific focus on sex differences, whereas relational research is based itself on the assumption that sporting practices are historically produced, socially constructed, and culturally defined to serve the interests and needs of powerful groups in society (Hall, 1996).

In 1996, Hall addressed the over-emphasis of categorical research within sport psychology. However, since then, several feminist researchers have attempted to shift the emphasis from biologically-based sex differences and psychologically-based gender differences to an examination of social cognitive models and constructs. For example, feminist researchers Diane Gill, Vikki Krane, Leslee Fisher, Carole Oglesby, Brenda Bredemeier, and Ruth Hall, among others, have explored such issues as feminist practice in sport psychology (Gill, 1994), feminist research (Krane, 1994), lesbian athletes' experiences in sport (Krane, 1996; 1997), the history of women in sport psychology (Gill, 1995), body image, eating and exercise behaviors among female sport participants (Krane, Waldron, Michalenok, & Stiles-Shipley, in press), and gendered and moral self-perceptions of professional bodybuilders (Fisher & Bredemeier, 2000).

As Gill (1994) argues, sport psychologists need to adopt a "true social-psychological perspective" and follow three steps for achieving a feminist approach to research in sport psychology: (1) increasing awareness of gender scholarship and valuing of the female experience, (2) incorporating feminist scholarship about gender, and (3) translating gender scholarship into feminist sport psychology practice (Gill, 1994).

Interestingly, at the 2000 AAASP conference, several presentations were devoted to the integration of feminism and sport psychology (Greenleaf, Collins, Waldron, &

Dieffenbach, 2000; Krane, Oglesby, Hall, Bredemeier, & Whaley, 2000; Roper, 2000). For example, Krane, Oglesby, Hall, Bredemeier, and Whaley (2000) discussed the past, present and future of feminist sport psychology. Each of the five presenters, with differing feminist perspectives and foci, described how they employed feminist perspectives in their sport psychological research and practice. Oglesby (2000) addressed early historic programs and the relationship of such historic programs to current feminist research. Hall (2000) discussed the issue of race in the feminist sport community. Krane (2000) examined the intersection of sexual orientation and gender. Bredemeier (2000) introduced the idea of praxis and its integration within her sociomoral research in sport psychology. And lastly, Whaley (2000) addressed feminist methodology and its distinction from other research methods. Also at the 2000 AAASP conference, Greenleaf, Collins, Waldron, and Dieffenbach (2000) offered a workshop that pertained to young professionals and graduate students' perspectives on issues related to feminist research and practice within sport and exercise psychology. More specifically, the presenters provided an overview of feminist theoretical perspectives applicable to sport and exercise psychology, identified and discussed the challenges faced by young professionals who adopt a feminist approach, and encouraged students and professionals to develop an awareness of feminist perspectives.

While it is important to explore feminist practices and beliefs within the sport context, it is also important to explore the roles and status of women within higher education, considering that the women in the present study work primarily in academia.

More specifically, it is necessary to discuss the culture of higher education and its impact on female academicians.

Women Working in Higher Education

One hundred years ago women were not allowed into the university to study, let alone to teach and conduct research. Although 42% of academic staff appointed in today's universities are female, they are frequently appointed at the lower level positions and are on temporary contracts (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999). In her first novel, Ann Oakley (1988) refers to academia as "the men's room" and argues that the values and attitudes that underpin academic work are masculinist ones where the pursuit of knowledge, recognition, and status rely on engaging in a competitive struggle for self-promotion and authority. In understanding the context of higher education, Woodall, Showstack, Towers, and McNally (1985) suggest that "the culture that pervades our higher educational institutions is one that emphasizes publishing, dashing around to conferences, competitive debate, scholarly analyses, and climbing the academic ladder" (p. 22), which many argue may fit more comfortably with men's working styles than with women's (Adler, Laney, & Packer, 1993; Morley, 1994). And, while women's presence within academia is changing, women remain outsiders both in the sense that they are in the numerical minority and that the values that inform academic life can be said to be masculine (Brooks, 1997; Gray, 1994).

The picture that emerges from both the statistical and case studies of women working within the university suggests the following conclusions: (1) Women are underrepresented in the academic profession; (2) women are severely under-represented

in certain academic sectors, especially those with a high social status; (3) there is inequality of distribution amongst the various ranks of the university hierarchy; and (4) women's careers are hindered, interrupted, or develop much more slowly than those of their male colleagues (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999; Kelly & Slaughter, 1991).

Within academia, research must be a priority in order for one to be successfully considered for tenure and promotion (Morley, 1994). Doing research, by its very nature, can be a lonely and isolating enterprise, regardless of gender. However, women researchers may experience particular problems because the organizational culture of research is built around the male experience. The dominant cultural model of the researcher is the isolated intellectual, beavering away on "his" own rather than co-operating with others. Feminists argue that such a model may fit more comfortably with men's working styles than with women's (Morley, 1994).

Additionally, women in research oftentimes find themselves as a "token woman" and the particular topics in which they are engaged may be outside the mainstream interests of the majority of their male colleagues (Morley, 1994). While men within academia also confront the need to publish, it has been argued that women within academia must go above and beyond what is required to prove themselves and their abilities as members within the academy (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999).

There is also a great deal of research which suggests that women are assigned heavier committee and service loads than their male counterparts (i.e., student advising, committee work) (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999; Morley, 1994). Due to the relatively small number of women faculty on many campuses, those who are

there are often pressed into serving on numerous committees in order to achieve female representation. As Safrit (1984) suggests, "If a committee exists, it will include at least one woman member. With no woman on a committee, it is somehow incomplete" (p. 108). Therefore, it is possible that women's involvement in committee work may impede their ability to conduct research and engage in applied work.

In 1985, Woodall, Showstack, Towers, and McNally suggested that while male professors were perceived as authoritarian and hard individuals, female professors were characterized as emotional, unable to control classes, and incapable of transmitting knowledge. Research has also shown that, once on the tenure track, women climb the academic ladder more slowly than men, are given tenure less frequently, and have their credentials, performance, and experience evaluated more stringently by employers and supervisors (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999). Research indicates that women are given promotion less often than men. And, publications written by women are often judged less competent than the same material written by men (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999).

Carter and Carter (1981) suggest that the problem faced by many women who enter traditionally male fields is that they arrive too late. Oftentimes, these formerly prestigious professions become two-tiered. One tier consists of prestige jobs of autonomy and the opportunity for promotion and good pay, whereas the other tier involves routinized, dead-end, lower paying positions. According to Carter and Carter (1981), women overwhelmingly occupy the lower tier, primarily but not exclusively because they arrive late in these professions. These authors note that although the number of women in academia is increasing, most are entering at a time when the position of university

professor is becoming less well paid and offers reduced autonomy. Moreover, women in academia tend to be concentrated in schools where such conditions are most pronounced: junior colleges, women's colleges, and undergraduate teaching positions. More recent research has shown that women professors hold an inordinate number of positions of the low-status ranks of part-time and non-tenured faculty (McGlen & O'Connor, 1998).

While female and male faculty both experience job and life stress, we know that the experience of each is quite different. For instance, research has found that female academicians experience a number of common stressors on a daily, ongoing basis, including managing their professional lives, educational needs, family schedules, economic affairs, career advancement, child-rearing and caring for the elderly (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999). In fact, recent research reveals that female faculty experience more work-related stress than do their male counterparts as a result of setting high expectations for themselves. In addition, studies show that the major cause of stress for female faculty members is role-conflict – working as a faculty member/wife/mother (Smith, Anderson, & Lovrich, 1995; Witt & Lovrich, 1988).

Motherhood is a common interruption to women's careers and is often regarded as a handicap to a successful career. Mothers, especially of young children, are a rarity in full-time academic positions, because of the conflicting demands of motherhood and an academic career. The practical difficulties of combining a family and career are compounded by the cultural assumption of incompatibility between public and private spheres, which women themselves become a part of the power dynamic by making

motherhood invisible at work due to not wanting to appear incompetent (Leonard & Malina, 1994).

An additional factor to consider when discussing the status of women in higher education is the role of mentoring. Mentoring is a powerful system for making progress. It is a system that has helped men advance in their careers, but few women have been privileged enough to experience its effects. Within academia, mentoring may provide support and encouragement as well as academic guidance. Moreover, a mentor can: act as an advocate, help a mentee understand and negotiate institutional barriers to secure funding, and most importantly, introduce a mentee to prominent others in the field.

One important aspect of matching mentors and mentees is their respective genders. Ideally, an academic mentor should be someone of the same gender in the same or closely related field. Indeed, for some women, attaching themselves to a powerful man may be the best means for a successful career. However, there is some evidence that cross-gender mentoring relationships can be more difficult to manage and more open to abuse or exploitation (Clutterbuck, 1991). Also, there is evidence that some women are opposed to the traditional male model of mentoring that emphasizes the difference in knowledge and skill between the expert, as master, and the novice as apprentice (Brooks, 1997). Brooks (1997) suggests that many women feel more comfortable with a female mentor who may have experienced similar anxieties or problems in her career. As a successful woman academic, the female mentor also provides a good role model for more junior women.

The Representation and Status of Women in Sport Psychology

In order to explore women's work experiences within the field of sport psychology, it is initially important to establish women's representation and status within the field. As addressed in Chapter 1 (Introduction), little research has specifically examined the history of women in sport psychology; however, there are a few indicators of the current status of female professionals in the field. One is the recent AAASP membership which consists of 456 women (students-241/professional-214) and 545 men (students-204/ professional-341) (A. Meyers, personal communication, November 21, 2000).

The number of past presidents of AAASP is another good indicator of women's status in sport psychology. An examination of the list of AAASP past presidents reveals that, from its inception in 1985 until 1994, this position was held by men. However, since 1994, five women have consecutively held this position. Two of the major applied sport psychology journals, *The Sport Psychologist* and the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, began having women editors in 1992. And, from 1986 on, the *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* also had women editors. Within the field, women occupy important committee assignments, serve on editorial boards, and are highly visible as presenters, authors, and professors (Gill, 1995).

Conferral of the title "Certified Consultant" represents recognition by AAASP of the attainment of a professional level of knowledge of the subdisciplines of applied sport psychology: health/exercise psychology, intervention/performance enhancement, and social psychology. Of the 130 total certified consultants in AAASP, 31 (23.8%) are

women (AAASP, 2000). It is important to recognize, however, that being a certified consultant does not equate to "doing" sport psychology. The opportunity to consult still remains in the hands of the athletes, coaches, and organizations seeking sport psychology services. Therefore, while female certified consultants do exist, the numbers are not predictive of the extent to which women are doing applied work. In fact, there are a number of consultants - both male and female - who are not certified by AAASP yet who successfully work with athletes, coaches, and teams.

Summary

While very little research or discussion relating to women's work experiences in sport psychology exists, the professional membership numbers, presence of women at conferences and in scholarly journals, and representation in academic positions suggests that women do hold positions in the field. Therefore, an important question becomes: If women hold positions, what are their experiences of working in the field and how have these experiences been shaped and constructed?

In the next chapter I will discuss the following aspects of this study: (a) rationale, (b) pilot testing, (c) bracketing interview and bias statement, (d) co-participants, (e) procedure, (f) interview, and (g) data analysis.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide a description of the experiences of professional women working in the field of sport psychology. More specifically, I explored the factors that stimulated their entrance into the field, their personal experiences working in the sport domain, any obstacles and/or barriers faced throughout their career advancement, and their future aspirations and goals as female professionals working in the field of sport psychology.

The methodology chosen for this study was the qualitative method of interviewing. This method refers to the process by which the experiences of each co-participant are obtained through open-ended interviews that focus on the co-participants' experienced meaning. Moreover, a semi-structured interview format was applied (Patton, 1990).

Rationale

Before embarking on a discussion of the qualitative research methods employed in this study, it is necessary to initially discuss the role of qualitative methodology when examining human relationships in the sport context. Traditionally, studies in the field of sport behavior have utilized quantitative research methodologies largely because this was the only research approach accepted by editorial boards of journals dedicated to the study of sport behavior (Newburg, 1994). However, in recent years, acceptance of qualitative

research methods has grown (Dale, 1996; Fisher & Bredemeier, 2000; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000).

Qualitative research is used to explore peoples' experiences and perceptions (Patton, 1990). Moreover, it stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and the issue being studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research seeks answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning (Patton, 1990).

The semi-structured interview format used in this study began with a series of questions (see Appendix A) that asked the co-participant to provide a first-person description of her experience (Patton, 1990). Questions were formulated in hopes of exploring specific instances and experiences within women's work experiences such as entrance into the field, obstacles and barriers, and future aspirations. Due to the potential magnitude of this study, it was necessary that I narrow the focus of inquiry. While the initial questions focused on background information, the majority of the questions were directed at the co-participants' obstacles and barriers as a woman in the field of sport psychology. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, feminist standpoint theory examines the world from the experience and perspective of oppressed and marginalized people. The co-participants within this study, all women, were assumed to represent an oppressed social group.

Another integral aspect of this study is its feminist perspective. Again, feminist research places women's experiences and perceptions at the center of inquiry (Krane,

1994). As Stanley (1990) points out, a defining assumption of feminism and feminist methodology is that "woman" is a necessary and valid category because all women share, by virtue of being a woman, a set of common experiences. These experiences are derived not only from their common gender, but from the common experience of oppression. Therefore, this study is grounded in the assumption that society is oppressive toward women and women's rights. Also, careful consideration was given to the various forms of oppression that impact women, such as race, class, sexual orientation, ability and age.

Pilot Testing

An initial pilot study was performed with a professional women in sport psychology. The individual was chosen because of her 8 years experience working in both the academic and applied areas of the field. Moreover, her expertise in qualitative methodology and feminist research provided me with suggestions and feedback that were useful during the actual interview process used with the research co-participants.

I interviewed the pilot study co-participant using the interview guide generated at the onset of the study (see Appendix A). The interview lasted approximately one hour and was subsequently transcribed and analyzed. Moreover, the interview provided me with feedback about the structure and content of the interview guide. No major changes or additions were made to the existing interview guide. The interview was used as a "practice" interview.

This pilot interview along with the literature review insights gained during my program of study, as well as the bracketing interview (described in the next section), led to a methodology that consisted of a semi-structured interview format.

Bracketing Interview

I participated in a bracketing interview with a colleague who was educated and experienced in qualitative interviewing. The bracketing interview was intended to uncover my personal biases and assumptions that could influence or hinder the process of data collection and analysis. In addition, the bracketing interview helped me identify points of tension and conflict (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The bracketing interview revealed my own biases regarding the issues of this study which I had developed relative to my involvement in the field of sport psychology over the past 6 years and also as they relate to my various identities. What follows is a description of my own bias statement generated from the bracketing interview.

Bias Statement

I am a 26 year old, Caucasian, heterosexual, middle class, doctoral student in the Cultural Studies program at the University of Tennessee, specializing in Sport Psychology. My father is a business executive and my mother, since my birth, works in the home. I am the oldest of two children. My sister, Elizabeth, is 18 years old and entering college in the Fall where she will play basketball.

While my family was "traditional" in the sense that my father worked, while my mother remained in the home, I received tremendous support and encouragement to pursue all interests, whether athletic, social, or academic. Both of my parents placed great emphasis on education and provided (emotionally, psychologically, physically, and financially) all that was "needed" for me to reach my academic pursuits.

I earned my Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Kent State University in 1996 and became interested in sport psychology through an article I had read on goal-setting and sport performance. From there, I furthered my knowledge on the subject and sought out options with regard to a future career in sport psychology. From my research, it appeared that my only option was to enter a graduate program. Interestingly, finding a graduate program was somewhat difficult as no graduate program listings existed. After applying to several programs, I chose to begin my graduate work at the University of Toronto. While the program at Toronto was particularly small, from my visit I felt as though it was the best "fit" for me and my needs.

I earned my Master of Science degree in sport psychology from the University of Toronto in 1998. While at the University of Toronto I was introduced to the applied-academic distinction within sport psychology and, like many graduate students, was attracted to working with athletes and teams, rather than to teaching and research. While I did conduct research and had numerous graduate teaching appointments, I worked extensively with individual athletes and teams at a variety of competitive levels. As a master's student I had an inordinate amount of opportunity to gain applied experience.

Due to my applied interests, my master's thesis examined elite-level swimmers' experiences of a mental skills training program. Throughout a 12-week period, five swimmers were introduced to five popular and highly researched psychological techniques including mental imagery, relaxation and centering, distraction control, cognitive restructuring, and goal setting. At the completion of the swimming season, I interviewed the participants to determine their experience with mental training.

Upon earning my masters degree, my goal was to earn my doctorate in sport psychology in order to obtain the education and training needed to secure a future career as a sport psychology consultant. Directly after completing my master's degree I entered the doctoral program in sport psychology at the University of Tennessee and obtained a highly coveted graduate assistantship as a sport psychology consultant with the women's athletic department. In contrast to my master's program which consisted of all but one woman, the gender make-up of my doctoral program was predominately male, with only one faculty member affiliated with sport psychology.

Interestingly, I entered a sport psychology program that was housed within a cultural studies unit. Cultural studies is a field that analyzes culture, or the social practices of groups and individuals (Sarder & Van Loon, 1997). The cultural studies project takes into consideration issues of social justice such as race, sexual orientation, gender, class, ethnicity, age, and ability among other identities and explores the negotiation of power within society. My supervisor, a strong advocate of cultural studies and its integration into the field of sport psychology, encouraged his students to apply cultural studies theory and perspectives to the psychology of sport. As a result, many of his students conducted dissertations and theses that integrated issues of social justice into the examination of sport. As a doctoral student at Tennessee, students were encouraged to explore not only the individual behaviors of people, but the social contexts within which such behaviors occurred.

For the first two years of my three year program, I consulted with various individual athletes and teams and provided administrative assistance to my supervisor.

However, during the first year of my doctoral program my interests and focus began to change. As a result of taking numerous courses in cultural studies which were encouraging me to challenge and critique the dominant norms and values in sport, I began to recognize the limited focus of much of the work in sport psychology. More specifically, as a female sport psychology consultant, I often felt as though my "voice" and experience were unrecognized and were unlike those of my male counterparts. From my experience, the philosophy of service provision within sport psychology appeared to be male-constructed and narrowly promoted the performance ethos of sport. Also, at conferences, very often the majority of applied presentations involved panels comprised only of men.

As a result of my experiences within the applied domain, I began to question my ability to work within a structure that often seemed to place little value on the female consulting experience. What I initially considered to be inadequacies as a consultant were, upon further reflection, really my unique and distinct style; a style that differed from the male-dominated norm. Therefore, as a result of my academic exposure to cultural studies and my personal experiences within the applied domain, I began to cling tightly to a framework that recognized and acknowledged my experience - Feminism.

Feminism, to me, is a movement dedicated to the abolition of sexist oppression. Moreover, being a feminist has become an integral aspect of my research and teaching philosophy, in addition to shaping my personal ideals and values. In both my teaching and research, I place women's and girls' experiences at the center of inquiry and place great emphasis on the action component of my work. Moreover, I want the work that I do

to be "wanted and needed" by those in need, particularly those who advocate for women and girls.

I believe that a feminist perspective is greatly needed in the field of sport psychology and while progress toward gender equity is occurring, further integration of feminism within sport psychology is needed. I believe that the field continues to be patriarchal in nature and fails to take into consideration issues of social justice. Also, the lack of diversity within the field is disconcerting and, from my perception, change is essential if the field is to advance beyond its current level.

As a woman working in the field, I am aware of the patriarchal nature of sport. Fortunately, I have had the opportunity to work with a number of talented female athletes, coaches, and administrators. And, while I am not asserting that all men are "the problem," it is important to embrace the positive interactions between women within the sport domain, especially as sport continues to be male-dominated.

As a young female professional in sport psychology, I am fully aware of the obstacles and barriers encountered by women working in the sport domain. In fact, while I have been fortunate to surround myself with exceptional supervisors and colleagues, it was not until the third year of my doctoral program that I truly appreciated the importance of a female role model and mentor. Prior to my third year, the University of Tennessee hired a new female faculty member. This particular woman has not only served as a teacher, but more importantly as a role model for all female students, especially those pursuing careers in academia.

Additionally, as a female graduate student, I am in many ways accustomed to being only one of few women, particularly in the graduate office setting. And, while I do not consider being the only woman to be an obstacle or barrier, the context in which I have worked has at times been very uncomfortable and disturbing, particularly as a woman. Very often I chose not to work in the office setting because it seemed to be a particularly sexist environment. Interestingly, although other women were present in the office setting, I oftentimes felt as though I was the only woman that was disturbed about the sexist environment or at least the only one willing to speak out against it.

My relationships with other female graduate students have been somewhat interesting in that I have had more interactions with male students than female students. With the exception of one close female friend that is in the department, I oftentimes felt as though I had little in common with other female students. Also, I had no desire to fit into a prescribed mold of what "being a woman" meant, or at least what being a heterosexual woman meant. And, although I do not feel as though I was at all criticized for my behavior, I did feel very isolated in the work environment. Looking critically at my behavior, I often felt disappointed in certain female students and their behavior which I believed encouraged the sexist environment. While I would not ever suggest that any sexist comments or behavior are deserved, I never understood why certain women would complain about being "picked on" yet continue to behave in a manner that drew attention to such aspects of their lives. Unfortunately, I tend to place too much pressure on women to change, whereas, it is generally the men, as in the case of the office, that are creating the environment.

During the last year of my doctoral program at the University of Tennessee, I had the opportunity to teach in the Women's Studies department. More specifically, I taught undergraduate students in courses such as Women in Society and Images of Women in Literature. It was from my interactions with such varied students that I slowly began to understand women and women's issues more clearly. Unfortunately, society often associates patriarchy with men and while patriarchy is defined as male-dominated power, it is also important to recognize the role women play in this system of oppression. From teaching students and observing fellow female graduate students, I realize now more than ever the need for change.

I found the bracketing interview to be instrumental in making me aware of preconceptions based on my own experience and education, which led me to be careful to use the co-participant's own language and refrain from jumping to conclusions if a co-participant began to articulate an experience or belief that mirrored my own. I was also reinforced in my belief that I possessed sufficient knowledge of the field and the issues of this study to conduct a probing interview.

A study of this nature always projects some measure of researcher subjectivity and there is no way to completely eliminate researcher bias. However, I feel that all reasonable precautions were taken to acknowledge my bias and its potential effects, even as I strived to minimize resultant misinterpretation that could be a consequence of such bias.

Co-Participants

The co-participants in this study consisted of eight "professional" women working in the field of sport psychology. Within this study, I use the term "co-participant" to represent the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between myself (the researcher) and the women I interviewed (co-participants) (Fisher & Bredemeier, 2000; Lather, 1988). This descriptor "co-participant" is particularly important in feminist research considering that women often feel as though they are "acted upon" as opposed to "acting in" their own lives (Fisher & Bredemeier, 2000). It also suggests that I would learn as much about myself from the co-participants as I hoped they would learn about themselves.

Criteria for the "professional" classification consisted of one or both of the following: (1) At least ten years experience in an academic institution (teaching and/or conducting research) with an emphasis in sport psychology, and/or (2) at least ten years experience practicing sport psychology/mental training with individual athletes, coaches, and/or teams at any level of competition. All of the co-participants met one or both of these criteria and were currently active in the field.

The requirement of ten years served to ensure that each co-participant had a significant amount of exposure to and experience within the professional realm of sport psychology. The co-participants interviewed were selected from a list of approximately 30 women that met the required criteria. The pre-established list was generated by me, graduate students in sport psychology, and sport psychology faculty familiar with the careers of prominent women in the field. To determine prospective co-participants'

willingness to participate in the study, I mailed or e-mailed each individual a Letter of Information and Informed Consent Form (Appendix B).

Once I obtained agreement to participate, I made each co-participant aware of the research process. As consensus was finalized, I scheduled each co-participant for an interview session to be conducted face-to-face or by telephone. Interviews were conducted over a two month period.

All of the co-participants in this study were Caucasian. The co-participants ranged in age from 39 to 52 years of age, with an average of 16 years experience as a professional within the field of sport psychology. Three of the co-participants reported being in a committed partnership and/or marriage and two of the eight co-participants had children, all of which were under 18 years of age.

All of the co-participants were employed as full professors in institutions of higher learning, with all eight being faculty members of Sport Science departments. All of the co-participants had tenure at their respective institutions. While all of the co-participants were academicians, each had experience working with individual athletes and/or teams. However, the majority of the co-participants considered academia their primary focus.

Each of the co-participants had extensive publications in major sport psychology journals such as the *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, The Sport Psychologist*, the *International Journal of Sport Psychology,* and the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology.* Moreover, all of the co-participants held leadership positions within the

field as journal editors, editorial board members, and officers or members of organizational committees.

Procedure

I contacted each co-participant through the mail or by e-mail (see Appendix B) and informed her of the proposed study and of my interest in her participation as one of eight interview co-participants. Once I received confirmation of her willingness to participate, we made arrangements to schedule a convenient time and place to conduct the interviews. Because of logistics, I interviewed six of the women in person and two over the telephone. I conducted all follow-up interviews over the telephone and through e-mail. Several studies have shown that self-disclosure and interview responses do not vary between telephone and face-to-face procedures (Bermack, 1989; Herzog & Rodgers, 1988; Kerr & Dacyshyn, 2000).

I reminded the co-participants that all interviews would be audiotaped and gave them the opportunity to reconsider their commitment to participate. Each co-participant was required to sign a consent form (Appendix B) before the interview process commenced. All co-participants agreed to the interview procedures. Following the interview, I gave each co-participant a final overview of the intent of the study and the upcoming timetable for transcription, member checking, and data analysis, as well as her involvement in each of these procedures.

I obtained information of a demographic nature from each co-participant through a Demographics Information Form (Appendix C) I gave to each co-participant at the completion of the interview. I asked each of the co-participants to return the

demographic information form and a copy of her current curriculum vitae at her earliest convenience. The curriculum vitae served as an additional source of demographic information.

Interview

The interview method I utilized in this study was the semi-structured interview format (Patton, 1990). By definition, a semi-structured interview is guided by a list of probes and/or questions in which the exact wording or order of the questions is not set ahead of time (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990).

I interviewed each co-participant by following a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A). The pace of the interview was set by the co-participant, and I used probing questions such as "tell me more" and "explain further" to clarify and understand rather than to direct/control the co-participants' information and responses. The majority of the interviews lasted one hour; however, some extended to almost two hours in length. The specific timeframe of each co-participant's interview varied since the interview process ended only when the co-participant felt she had said all she wanted to say regarding her experience.

Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. I transcribed four of the interviews, while four were transcribed by a professional transcription company. I added notes reflecting mannerisms and body language to the transcriptions of those interviews I conducted in person when they seemed relevant. I removed all indications of the co-participants' names and other identifying features from the written transcription. The only written identification of the co-participants was their signatures on the Informed

Consent Forms (see Appendix B), which I kept in a separate file cabinet. I kept tapes and related information under lock and key and erased each tape subsequent to transcription for the purposes of confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The first step of data analysis was to create a verbatim transcript of each interview coupled with my notes regarding those elements of the interview not captured by the tape, such as body language and mannerisms. Following this, I studied the individual transcripts in order to become familiar with each as its own entity. Every co-participant's transcript had its own "flavor" that reflected those aspects most salient within the co-participants relayed experience. Despite similarities of issues, the depth and breadth to which these issues were addressed varied among co-participants. I felt it was important to honor the co-participants differences as well as their similarities. These differences are discussed in more detail in the Results section.

I mailed or e-mailed each co-participant a copy of her personal interview transcript and asked her to amend any information she perceived to be inaccurate or that misrepresented her experience. Even if accurate, co-participants were allowed to delete portions of their interviews which they preferred not to have included in the portrayals of their experience. I also invited co-participants to contact me at any time throughout the research process to discuss questions, provide clarification, or add new information they considered important in reflecting on their experiences related to the topics of this study.

I then subjected approved transcripts to thematic analysis in order to identify the common emergent structures of the co-participants' experiences (Patton, 1990). I noted

themes and refined them systematically. I then used these themes to pull together separate pieces of information from the interview texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990).

After I noted themes or patterns, I clustered the specific quotes into categories. Clustering involves the process of moving data and themes to higher levels of abstraction. Clustering was used to attempt to understand the co-participants' experiences by grouping (Patton, 1990).

To assure cross validation, I was assisted in the process of theme identification by one other individual familiar with qualitative research (Patton, 1990). I provided this particular individual with verbatim copies of the transcripts, deleting all identifiers to preserve the confidentiality of the co-participants. I listened to this particular individual's perception of possible themes before offering my own views; in order to minimize the influence of my own perceptions and biases. This particular individual and I agreed upon all themes, however, further discussion resulted in the elaboration of several important sub-themes.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide a description of the experiences of professional women working in the field of sport psychology. More specifically, I explored the specific factors that stimulated eight women's entrance into the field, their alignment within feminism, any obstacles or barriers faced throughout their career development, and their future aspirations and goals as female professionals working in the field of sport psychology.

The experiential themes from the interviews are described within this chapter. Each theme is discussed separately. It is important to recognize, as indicated by Patton (1990), that very often the major themes of one's findings are consistent with the interview guide questions.

Presentation of Themes

In the following sections, the themes of the co-participant interviews are presented. The findings focus on the following major themes: (a) stumbling into the profession, (b) the context of sport psychology, (c) women's status in the field of sport psychology, (d) obstacles and barriers, (e) the feminist sport psychologist, and (f) supporting women in sport psychology. Table 1 outlines the six major themes and sub-themes.

Theme #1: Stumbling into the Profession

"Stumbling into the profession" refers to the co-participants initial exposure to and interests in the field of sport psychology. All but one of the co-participants entered the field at a time when no "traditional" and/or "formal" sport psychology graduate programs existed. As one co-participant indicated,

> I was just regular education teaching preparation, and then I stayed on for my master's degree and my Ph.D. officially in the area of motor learning because there wasn't such a thing as sport psychology yet...at the time you could say that the field was under the generic umbrella of the psychology of motor behavior. So, it really included what is now motor control and sport psychology. At the time, of course, the body of knowledge was small, and there had been few people working in the West coast and a few in the Midwest.

As another co-participant stated,

> I just really fell into it (sport psychology) and then looking for graduate programs was interesting because nobody had any... 'you mean sport psychology do they even teach that?' (universities response to her inquiry about sport psychology graduate programs).

While no formalized programs were in existence for the majority of the co-participants, the majority took an introductory sport psychology course that confirmed their interest in the area of sport psychology. As one co-participant suggested, "(from taking a sport psychology course) I knew that was the area I wanted to study...I took the first sport psych class and it was clear that was what I wanted."

In addition to taking an introductory sport psychology course there were various other factors that triggered the co-participants' interest in the field. Specifically, all of the co-participants were interested in the field due to their personal involvement and interest in sport as athletes and/or coaches. As one co-participant stated,

Table 1. MAJOR THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Major Theme	Sub-Themes
1. Entrance into the field of sport psychology	No formalized programs Initial sport psychology course Athletic/coaching involvement
2. The context of sport psychology	Perceived interests of students "Allure" of applied work Limitations of "applied" domain Others' perceptions of SP Limitations of organizations
3. Women's status in sport psychology	Perception of gender Documented history of SP Academic versus applied context Organizational status Perception of self
4. Obstacles and barriers	Overt versus subtle barriers Academic barriers Salary discrepancies Hiring/job searches Family concerns Homophobia Research interests Applied barriers Exclusionary nature of SP Dominance of men
5. The Feminist Sport Psychologist	Disassociation from feminist label Feminist behavior Defining feminism Complexity of oppression
6. Supporting women in sport psychology	Female support system Being a role model/mentor Supervision needs of female students Organizational support Competition between women

> I've always been in sports, all through high school and in college and I always kind of knew that I wanted to do something in sport, but what are the options? I had this voice in the back of my head from my father - "what are you going to be - a gym teacher the rest of your life?

Interestingly, one of the co-participants was initially interested in the field because of her work with a sport psychologist. As she indicated,

> My first interest (in the field) was when I found myself on the team and there was a psychologist who wanted to do things with the team...I had never heard of sport psychology before. I was a physical education major, but it was something that kind of interested me.

Another co-participant became interested in the field through her sport involvement and her recognition of the mental aspects of the game. As she indicated,

> I left University having been an athlete in four different sports, being very active as a tennis player in particular. But all of my life I've been known as sort of a come-from-behind person and I certainly was not the most talented, but I won a lot of matches and was nationally ranked, and I think I became really intrigued by the fact that a lot of what happens in competition is psychological as well as physical.

Four of the co-participants had previous coaching experience. As a result, coaching provided several of the co-participants with direct exposure to sport psychological issues. One co-participant described her coaching experiences as integral to her entrance into the field and her subsequent research interests.

> Girls were interesting in the 70's. I could work them as hard as I could in practice, and they would never complain. But the thing that bothered me the most was on Saturday morning, we would get in the vans to go to the competitions and the first question invariably would be, 'do you think we'll be home by 6:00 because I'm suppose to have a date at 7:00 or 7:30'...I couldn't understand quite what their thinking was, or how they added the pieces together...We go, and I'll play this long, but then I'd like to get home for my date. So, I decided I needed to know a lot more about motivation of kids. So that was sort of the why of getting involved. It grew out of coaching and a concern that I had that I couldn't answer.

Another co-participant suggested that her work as a youth coach sparked her interest in the development of children through sport participation. As she stated,

> These kids I coached over several years were developing confidence, motivation, and good peer relationships and family relationships and so forth. That jumped out at me right away as sort of the beginning (of my interest in sport psychology). In doing so then, I made a conscious decision to go into the field of sport psych or whatever you want to call it.

In addition to the co-participants' interests in the psychological aspects of sport, as developed through their coaching experience, another factor impacting their decision to enter the field of sport psychology was the increasing difficulties associated with remaining in the coaching profession. As one co-participant stated,

> I had to make a career decision - do I stay in coaching full-time because Title IX had kicked in and programs were actually legitimate...there was an athletic budget supporting what we were doing in women's sports. And, it was clear at that point I was going to take a huge salary cut if I went on and stayed in coaching because they were just starting and it was not uncommon for you to just be a half-time coach. So, I decided that ten years of coaching, I had a career, if you will, and that I needed to go and get my Ph.D. (in sport psychology).

Similarly, another co-participant discussed her dissatisfaction with coaching, particularly at the collegiate level. As she stated,

> I coached high school before and really really loved it and it's not that I didn't like the college students, but the whole structure of college sports...I wasn't the type of person that wanted to be a year-round babysitter and pay attention when the kids go to class, the year-round travel and training, recruiting - this was a pretty high powered program and it (the position) didn't play to my strengths at all, especially at that level.

Theme #2: The Context of Sport Psychology

"The context of sport psychology" refers to the co-participants' perceptions of the field. Moreover, throughout the interviews, all of the co-participants made reference to the context, that is, the existing structure of the field of sport psychology.

All of the co-participants suggested that the majority of students interested in sport psychology are attracted to the field for the applied work with athletes and teams rather than academic research and teaching. Moreover, the co-participants' indicated that the majority of incoming students are particularly interested in working with elite sport populations. As one co-participant noted,

> I find that most all of them (incoming students) want to do applied work and in some ways I think what I do is applied. The image that many of them, especially master's students, and we're getting more and more out of psychology, really don't have a background except for what they've seen on television or read, and what they want to do is work with Olympic athletes or pro athletes.

Also, all of the co-participants perceived that students associated the applied field with being "sexy," "glamorous," "alluring," and "catchy". As one co-participant stated,

> I personally believe that the draw to the elite level sports is primarily related to the glitz. It's sexy, the glamour and people wanting to drop names and rub elbows.

As another co-participant suggested,

> It's amazing why students want to get into this field. They think that they will have all these opportunities to work with high-level athletes and teams and be able to hobnob with the fast and glamorous world of high-level sport.

All of the co-participants considered the traditional definition of "applied" sport psychology to be extremely limiting. Moreover, several of the co-participants considered that the field placed little value and/or emphasis on non-elite populations, many of which the co-participants worked with. As one co-participant stated,

> It's an interesting predicament that I often find myself in. I am working in a system that is promoting one thing - elite athletes. But I work with an entirely different population and I often wonder how I actually fit into the structure of applied sport psychology.

Another co-participant suggested,

> I think that my philosophy that our field is near-sighted and puts too much emphasis on the elite athlete because I don't know. Where does my work fit in the context of that? My immediate reaction is to say that I don't care, but that may sound elitist. It probably doesn't fit in that context.

While the majority of the co-participants had worked with elite sport populations (i.e., collegiate-level athletes), all of the co-participants considered working with non-elite populations such as youth, elderly, and disabled athletes to be just as important, if not more important for the advancement of our field. As one co-participant suggested,

> In Dan Gould's presidential address that was published in 1990, given in 1989, he stated a bunch of things to strive for in the field, and one of them he titled 'sport psychology for all', and by all he meant not only elite athletes, but young, old, children, people at risk, individuals with cognitive disabilities or physical disabilities. Here we are ten years later and I don't think we've done that at all. I think there's so much we can do in terms of enhancing, let's say with middle and older adults. Let's say enhancing self-perceptions in order to enhance physical activity or exercise. How to cope with their needs and quality of life. With the young kids, making coach education and parent education programs mandatory, more prevalent so that adults realize the kind of impact we can have on children positively.

Another co-participant suggested,

> I would imagine that there are others like me that are disillusioned that so many feel attracted to the glitz and allure of the elite athlete. However, I don't think they (elite athletes) need us as much as children, adolescents, older sedentary women and men, or one's that don't exercise at levels to improve any psychological or physical health benefits. I think the elite athlete over time has developed these skills - you know, some maybe more than others - have developed the kinds of skills to cope with the high-level competition they face.

Two of the co-participants discussed other professionals, particularly those outside sport psychology, and their perceptions of the field. As one co-participant suggested,

> I'd like to see sport psychology be perceived as more legitimate. I still see people in kinesiology see sport psychology as kind of pop psychology working with athletes, and always feeling like I need to justify that.

This particular co-participant further commented,

> I think the performance enhancement (of sport psychology) aspect is certainly the most visible one, probably the part that gets sociologists saying 'oh, don't mention the word sport psychology to us.' I also feel that the focus on performance enhancement, that it makes them feel we are less scientific than we are.

As another co-participant suggested,

> Sport psychology sometimes gets a bad rap. It could be for any number of reasons. It is possible that we, as a field, don't do a good enough job marketing ourselves. It is also possible that we market ourselves just as the applied work we do with athletes. That is what people think of when they think of sport psychology. It's probably a lot more complex than just that though. It also has to do with the lack of diversity that we have in our field. Other sport scholars think we're just interesting in helping elite athletes which is definitely not true of all of sport psychology, especially not me.

All of the co-participants were members of several professional organizations and associations such as AAASP, NASPSPA, APA Division 47, and AAHPERD. However, each indicated that they were only able to devote their time to one or two primary organizations. As one co-participant stated,

> I didn't join AAASP because I was waiting to see what direction this organization was going and then at a certain point you can be involved in only so many organizations that you wouldn't have time to do your work.

Of the six co-participants involved in AAASP, all considered it limiting in its focus on the performance of elite-level sport participants. As one co-participant suggested, "But you know, AAASP completely ignores youth. They ignore learning. Let's just jump to performance. You know, it's like a natural progression." Another co-participant indicated,

> It's unfortunate that AAASP focuses so heavily on elite-level performers. There is such a need for attention on other populations, those rarely given the attention.

> Also, the overriding attention given to performance rather than enjoyment is unsettling.

Five of the co-participants discussed the need for AAASP to begin to broaden its "applied" meaning and to begin to incorporate the social and cultural context. As one co-participant stated,

> I worry sometimes that too many of those (applied) presentations lack the substance which is critical. And, also some of the students, particularly the younger ones don't recognize the role of the social context and how valuable that really is in applied work.

This particular co-participant further suggested,

> There's always a little bit of a voice (referring to women's voice and representation of the social aspects) and this year there were some good sessions on feminism and feminist theory, methods, and the social sections and those will have small numbers of people and the masses will go to hear about some (applied) technique.

Three of the co-participants discussed the whiteness of AAASP and the need to diversify its members. As one-co-participant stated,

> As a field we really need to start looking at the members. Where are the people of color? It's not that only White people are interested in sport psychology. Something much deeper than that is going on. It's something that as an organization and a field we need to be conscious of and we need to remedy.

Another co-participant stated,

> It's unsettling to witness the lack of diversity within our organizations and the people that attend. I wonder what the experience is for the African American man or woman that is present at such conferences. They are very much a minority, which from my point of view is quite disturbing.

One co-participant discussed her skepticism surrounding the elitist nature of some conferences and associations within sport psychology. More specifically, she addressed the ramifications of the growing need for professionalism within the field. As

she indicated,

> Well, they wanted to go to better hotels, and they wanted to have better sites, you know in terms of more like what professional people with money went to - not places that we in academe went to because it was affordable - nice, but affordable.

Theme #3: Women's Status in the Field of Sport Psychology

All of the co-participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of women's status in the field of sport psychology. Two of the co-participants indicated that they did not consider gender to be a lens through which they experienced or viewed the field. As one co-participant stated,

> It's hard to answer that question because I haven't really thought in those terms; specifically, women and men versus rather just the field of sport psychology (as a whole)...I kind of perceived myself as a sponge trying to soak up everything I could (regardless of gender).

The other co-participant suggested that she preferred to look for gender similarities rather than differences. She further stated,

> You know I look for gender similarities, and I find that we are a lot similar in our thinking, but where there are differences, then we need to confront and talk about those.

Three of the co-participants noted the preponderance of male professionals and the subsequent absence of female professionals in the written history of sport psychology. As one co-participant suggested,

> Some people sort of kid about there being a grandmother and grandfather of the world of sport psychology, and Dorothy Harris is often attributed that characteristic as being a grandmother. I think Dorothy Harris was working in sport psychology, she obviously helped get going AAASP, certainly with the sport psychology academy, which sometimes gets forgotten. I think that's unfortunate.

Another co-participant stated,

> While we read all about the history of men in sport psychology we rarely are introduced to the figural women that impacted the history and development of our field. There were some amazing women that are oftentimes overlooked, women that today's students are not familiar with because they are simply taught about Coleman Griffith, Norman Triplett, and numerous other men.

All of the co-participants suggested that they considered there to be a tremendous number of strong female professionals in the field of sport psychology today. As one co-participant stated,

> There are many, many strong women scholars, I can name many. The fact that you are limiting yourself to just ten (co-participants in this study). I think 20 years ago, you couldn't come up with five.

However, when discussing women's status in the field of sport psychology, all of the co-participants made the distinction between the applied and academic domains.

Although only three co-participants considered applied work, in its most traditional sense, to be a primary part of their professional work, all of the co-participants indicated that there was a greater bias or exclusion towards women within the applied context of sport psychology. As one co-participant suggested,

> I do think when it comes to the clinical (applied sport psychology) work there is still (a bias)...if there's any bias it would be there (in applied context) because most of the work that is done with athletics is male-dominated and there is still a male jock mentality and especially among men who have been athletes themselves. I can't give you concrete evidence, it's just that kind of perception that is there.

One co-participant in particular discussed the recent advances of women in the applied domain, but suggested that even today the exclusion of female consultants in the area of men's sport continues. As she stated,

> If you look at the International Olympic Registry, if you look at the numbers of women who have worked with our teams, there's a substantial number and they have had very good results and they're very well respected in their field. I think

> there's a preponderance of men out there. Some of that still is that there are two huge male-only sports - baseball and football. I know of only two women that have ever worked in those worlds. So, it's very hard to break that barrier.

As previously mentioned, all of the co-participants distinguished between the applied and academic aspects of sport psychology. From an academic standpoint, all of the co-participants indicated that they perceived there to be a high number of strong female academicians in sport psychology. As one co-participant suggested,

> Well, I think that women have taken leadership roles...we've been right in there, especially forming sport psychology academically. We've had women who have been President of NASPSPA, Division 47 of APA, the Academy, and AAAPHERD...Women as sport psychologists have even become chairpersons of their departments.

Another co-participant stated,

> I think there are some really talented women out there that have done a continued body of literature that's been really important to out field. Then, you have people like Jean Williams whose book is probably still the best known sport psychology textbook used in colleges and universities. So, I think women really have established themselves (in academia).

One co-participant compared women's status in academia and the applied domain as follows,

> I think that while women in the traditional applied areas face more exclusion and are not accepted as much, women in the academy are much more accepted in sport psychology. Possibly this is due to the great amount of women physical educators that have always been involved in academic, even when women's physical education was separate.

Exploring women's representation and status in sport psychology organizations and associations was also something these women felt was important to consider. Only one co-participant discussed the history of women's involvement in AAASP and noted the progress made throughout the years. As she stated,

> The women's involvement in AAASP has been an interesting one. We started out in the traditional roles. Jean Williams was secretary-treasurer, while we had male presidents and male president-elects, and it seemed like they had for about the first five or six years, all male presidents. It was like it was going to be the same old, same old boys network that we've had in every other organization. I think there were enough people on the executive board who said, 'you know, look...Put two women up and we'll have a woman president,' but that was done and since then...I was going to say we've had almost an equal number of men and women as presidents across the history of the organization.

Another co-participant discussed her personal experience as a member of AAASP as follows,

> I had the chance to serve on the AAASP board and that was very insightful into the politics of any organization and I felt that through that, I've had the opportunity now to serve on other committees that have been formed within AAASP and I'm glad to have that opportunity...I didn't perceive that I was ever not encouraged to speak.

The majority of the co-participants, when asked to discuss their perceived status as a woman in the field of sport psychology, considered the question particularly difficult to answer. As one co-participant stated, "I don't know, you could ask them (referring to the field). It's funny, you know. It is hard." Another co-participant suggested, "I don't know how to answer that."

Once the co-participants began to discuss their perceived status in the field, they pointed to such accomplishments as publication records, tenure, administrative ranks, editorial positions, and invited speeches. As one co-participant suggested,

> I guess if I was going to...on what basis would I say I was perceived as a leader in the field I guess I would have to say I'm regularly nominated for running for office, high office. I'm invited more often than I can accept to be keynote speakers, to write book chapters for books, and then with my administrative half I am invited to apply for higher level chair positions. So, I would say that people don't ask me to do those things if they don't perceive me as a leader. So, I perceive that I am a leader in the field.

Another co-participant stated,

> I've consistently published over the last 20 years. So, it's not like I did a whole bunch for six years, got tenure and then became a couch potato. So, I think the consistent publishing probably.

While all of the co-participants pointed to their professional accomplishments as important indicators of their status in the field, several of the co-participants preferred not to view themselves in such a manner. As one co-participant indicated,

> Status has never driven me in terms of - I wanted to be number one, but I don't make that my goal and have all of my decisions revolved around that. I mean, what I attempt to do is be good.

Another co-participant stated,

> I don't think of those things (status), and the reason I don't is that I fear that when one starts to think about those things like status and prestige and how many publications you have, that may lead to losing sight of why I got in this for the first place.

One co-participant did not perceive that her sport psychology consulting accomplishments were recognized within the field. Interestingly, this particular co-participant had consulted with a number of high profile athletes. As she stated,

> There is also another side to that that's always an interesting debate that I have with some of my colleagues (regarding why women are not visible in the consulting domain). For me, I think because of my early training in psychology, I really took on that private relationship that you have with another person (athlete). So, I have never publicly said who I work with. Most of my male colleagues think of themselves as coaches, and they don't have a second thought about saying, "oh yea, I've been working with (name of high profile athlete)" or whoever it happens to be. So, it created a different sense of public acknowledgment I think of who people are working with, and I think that was partially because the women athletes were also less open to say publicly - "I'm working with a sport psychologist."

Theme #4: Obstacles and Barriers

All of the co-participants were asked whether they had experienced any obstacles or barriers throughout their career advancement. Seven of the co-participants suggested that they did not experience "blatant" or "overt" obstacles or barriers within the field of sport psychology. However, upon their initial rejection of the question, all co-participants began to discuss various "subtle" and/or "little" barriers. One particular co-participant described what she considered "little" barriers or obstacles as follows,

> Certainly there are small things that you have to put up with and live with everyday. Why didn't I dress up? I get that question from faculty members in the lab. Why didn't I dress up like Susan or something like that. Little comments that are just little things that you have to live with everyday.

Another co-participant discussed the "subtle" barriers faced as follows,

> You know...I didn't face big barriers, not like you hear about from other people, but of course there were some small issues that impacted my advancement in the field. By subtle, I mean that they weren't that hard to get past. I guess you just have some hurdles that you can't get around.

All of the co-participants distinguished between their applied and academic work. Within academia, all of the co-participants suggested that they experienced and witnessed various forms of gender discrimination. However, the forms of discrimination faced were not specific to the sport psychology community, but rather embedded within the larger academic culture. As one co-participant indicated,

> I would say within my own sport psychology community, there have been little, if any...but as a faculty member in the broader community of kinesiology, I do feel that yea. I mean, my experience at (University) was a good old boy network and there were actually several of the women who were the more competent scientists. The men had a way of demeaning us and made themselves look better. These were more (inaudible). I'm not talking about all men, but a few who you know were probably insecure or had no self-esteem.

Another co-participant suggested that while she did not experience "overt" forms of discrimination, she was familiar and experienced with the subtleties that many female academicians face such as the glass ceiling and salary discrepancies. As she stated,

> Probably I'm more aware of the subtleties that occur within the system. Such things as the glass ceiling exists and when I started, very few of the upper full-professor ranks (were women) and even in various disciplines which women are thrust into. Salary discrepancies no matter how you balance it out.

This particular co-participant went further to discuss gender discrimination in hiring practices. As she stated,

> And then, the subtle ways that job searches go on and while it's not overt that people are looking for men or women...The kinds of things that they look for sometimes are things more developed in men. For instance, if they say they need someone who is a tight researcher or who is in fundable areas. Some of the ways that men are trained, they are socialized to be the more competitive, you know, aggressive, the kind of way that is respected in faculty and academia. It's usually not overt, but some of the subtle preferences for certain styles. In many places you have to fit in with a group and if you're the only woman or the only minority then you're not a team player in some ways, but it's because of different activities or lifestyles or things like that.

Another co-participant discussed her perceptions of hiring and job searches as follows,

> When I applied for this job here and there were some other men that applied for this position I felt I was the best qualified for the position with my scholarship. At the time I think I had four or five publications out, but the comment from some of these men was that I got the job because I was a woman - Affirmative Action.

This particular co-participant further suggested,

> There were a few jobs that I applied to where I made the short-list and it was pretty much two candidates and they gave the jobs to the male candidates. Can I say that it was based on gender? No, I can't, it could have been fit.

Three of the co-participants also discussed the barriers faced as a result of the nature of their research interests. As one co-participant stated,

> I was specifically told not to do this line of research. It would kill my career I was told. Do something safe was the recommendation.

This co-participant further suggested that "the field of sport psychology was not ready for that type of research." Another co-participant discussed the need to conduct "safe" research prior to earning tenure. As she stated, "I think I have changed research directions and styles as a career progression, and I might not have done that had I not had tenure early."

The issue of maintaining a family was discussed by three of the co-participants, of which two had children. As one co-participant indicated,

> Having children oftentimes creates chaos in your academic life and oftentimes it appears to other faculty, particularly men, that you are not pulling your weight, that you are slacking off. The reality is that you do have to care for your children, especially when you're a single mother. And being a single mother presents many barriers for women in academic and upward movement.

Another co-participant stated,

> When you have children you have less time tied up at the university. Children require a great deal of time and somebody has to care for the children. Yes, there are female faculty out there that seem to manage quite well, but I do believe if you asked them if having children was a barrier they would most definitely tell you yes.

Interestingly, while the majority of the obstacles and barriers discussed were various forms of discrimination faced throughout career advancement, the majority of the co-participants placed greater emphasis on the barriers "others" faced. Further, all of the co-participants suggested that the obstacles and barriers they faced were inconsequential in comparison to those for women in departments of engineering, chemistry or exercise physiology, which they considered to be highly patriarchal. As one co-participant stated,

> My female colleagues in engineering struggle because their research is not always valued by their male colleagues. They don't have female colleagues to have a good support group or as colleagues to work with. So, they're pretty much isolated in the department that they're in.

Only one of the co-participants was an open lesbian. While this particular co-participant did not perceive any obstacles associated with her sexual orientation within the sport psychology community, she did describe the homophobic culture of academia. More specifically, she noted that it was not necessarily heterosexual faculty that were homophobic, but rather other lesbians, particularly those who were closeted. As she stated,

> The one person was kind of deviant and the other would be downright rude and nasty and both would do a lot of behind the scenes kind of things to make people angry. I was their person of choice. It turned out when I came out and started doing things and they all knew I was a lesbian - I got the most negative reception from five other lesbians who happened to be closeted.

She further stated,

> What happened was when I came out the other people (lesbians) were very defensive. Everything that I did would become a department battle. They turned nasty and most of it was behind my back and it wasn't until people told me what they were doing. All of this comes back to the fact that I came out as a lesbian and that I was successful. It threatened them and their status as a lesbian.

Within the applied domain, the co-participants described a variety of barriers and obstacles. As previously stated, several of the co-participants perceived a greater gender bias within the applied context of sport psychology. As one co-participant suggested, "I think it (applied work) was a hard road for women, largely because the world of sport is so dominated by men." She further suggested, "In the consulting world, I think there have been lots of struggles for women and largely because of the stereotypes that suggested that males knew more about sports." However, this particular co-participant

asserted that while the consulting domain was difficult for women to break into, once a woman enters, similar to male consultants, she must prove her knowledge of the particular sport she is working with. As she stated,

> But once they (athletes) hear you speak of or they see your results that you have with them personally, I think that gets set aside pretty quickly (the bias against women). I wouldn't say that I felt a lot of pressure there from a gender discrimination perspective.

Another co-participant stated,

> It was hard for me to work with athletes or at least with high-level athletes. I seemed very different than everyone else. I was a woman. And by being a woman it made it particularly difficult to get in the door. And that's the first step.

Several of the co-participants provided potential explanations for women's marginalization within the applied domain. As one co-participant suggested,

> That men could be involved in almost any sport from the very beginning. There were only two major professional sports, obviously for women - golf and tennis. So, that limited the amount of consulting that was available out there (for women).

This particular co-participant further suggested,

> Plus, I think there was also a bias that suggested that men had played more and done more and therefore, had some sense of credibility that comes along with been a top-notch athlete. We didn't have a National competition when I was in college. So, it was more difficult to establish your own credibility, particularly I think in team sports. I think there weren't very many women in the field partially because of that. There were some very talented women educators who were writing and doing research related to sport psychology, but you didn't hear much about them in the practice of sport psychology.

Another co-participant stated,

> The women tend to be, the ones I know, more humble, maybe humble isn't quite the right word, but not as forward pressing their case which is definitely not my style, but that's personality too. It's not true of all men, but some of them are out there promoting their case in a way and drawing attention and those kinds of things.

Theme #5: The Feminist Sport Psychologist

All of the co-participants considered themselves to be feminists. However, five of the co-participants were hesitant to provide a solid definition of what "being a feminist" meant to them. As one co-participant stated, "that's a wonderful question. I'm not sure I can answer that very well." Another suggested, "well, that's funny because I don't use that term a lot."

Two of the co-participants, while they both considered their behavior to be feminist, preferred not to use the feminist label. As one co-participant stated, "When I grew up, the term feminist didn't even exist. So, it's not so easy for me to classify myself and call myself a feminist." As the other co-participant suggested, "I've never been big on titles, labels. I think labels create barriers." This particular co-participant went further to suggest that she questioned whether being a feminist was synonymous with being "inclusive." As she stated,

> I do a lot of work with a local high school athletic association and when we're talking about anything, if I don't think they are being insightful, understanding, reasonable about what it means for the girls in the women's programs, I'll talk about that. Now, is that being a feminist or is that being inclusive? My concern is that every child who wants to play in sport ought to have the opportunity to play.

While several were reluctant to use the term, or at least not familiar with using the feminist label, all considered their actions and behavior to be feminist. As one co-participant suggested,

> In my reading and my research, I have found that I have learned that being a developmentalist is totally consistent with a feminist approach, but I never knew that before.

Another co-participant stated, "I suppose if you looked at my behavior you would say 'yes' I was a feminist depending on which definition you chose, and I know there are many out there."

All of the co-participants went further to provide examples in their professional work that they considered to be feminist driven. As one co-participant indicated,

> I think the readings that we choose, the flavor of the classroom, setting up much more of a collaborative approach which I think originated from a more feminist perspective even though it is used by many people now. Setting up a safe space within the classroom so you can feel safe to comment rather than the domineering atmosphere.

Another co-participant discussed her role as a journal editor and reviewer as being feminist in nature.

> I find myself as an editor, as an associate editor, as a reviewer, writing commentary to authors who I either know or don't know, the thinking of them as a person on the other side who's receiving an evaluation. I get a lot of negative reviews all of the time, and I know how awful it feels to read what a crappy job you did with the research when I know I didn't. So, I guess I would say that what strikes me is I try to think of a real person being on the other side reading these reviews and trying to write a review that eliminates the unnecessary negative tone that often gets put in a review because...I'm a blind reviewer and there's no real social interaction here. Using a mentoring approach...I've seen several articles now that say that this is very consistent with a feminist approach, but I wouldn't know because I don't read feminist material.

For several of the co-participants, developing and offering courses relevant to women were considered feminist actions. Also, being active in women's issues and women's organizations on campus and in the community was also important. As one co-participant stated, "I started a gender course at (university) and I was active in women's studies...and then I moved to (university) and started another gender issues course with graduate students where we discussed feminist perspectives and tried to integrate that."

Another co-participant described the area in which she worked and the display of feminist posters, bumper stickers and quotes.

As I previously stated, several of the co-participants were reluctant to align themselves with the feminist label. However, all of the co-participants were able to define what it meant to them to be a feminist. As one co-participant stated,

> For me, to be a feminist means to be an advocate for women. I believe very strongly in Title IX and I do a lot of work as an expert witness in court cases about Title IX, those kind of things. So, definitely, I consider myself an advocate of female individuals who are involved in sports.

Another co-participant defined being a feminist as follows,

> Certainly putting women's issues at the forefront...The other thing I think about feminist perspective adds on is an action component - putting your words into action. Actually trying to change the system instead of just talking about it.

Only one co-participant aligned herself with radical feminist beliefs. As she asserted,

> Being a feminist is a very important aspect of who I am and being a feminist means many different things. To me, however, I define it as the equality between women and men and working for the rights of women and girls. However, I go further to suggest that we need change. We need to recreate the structure that are embedded in patriarchy. Too often we simply want everything to be equal and I don't think it ever will be as is.

All of the co-participants considered feminism to incorporate other forms of oppression such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and ability. As one co-participant suggested,

> I've not pursued a feminist line of research and it is not where my research is, but I think in terms of my perspective that I take on who I choose to take on as graduate students. I do have choices there and they're not based on GRE scores and I know one time there was a Korean woman who applied for a doctorate degree and I already had my plate pretty full in terms of graduate students, but given that there are so few Korean women even applying let alone pursuing research and work in this field I took her on. I already had a male student from Korea and knew that it was quite a patriarchal society.

As another co-participant suggested,

> Most people taking a feminist perspective, those in women's studies, have expanded that to include cultural identities and looking at the intersections but that's more recent and I think that is extremely critical for understanding any relations, gender relations as well.

Theme #6: Supporting Women in Sport Psychology

The significance and importance of social support networks was particularly salient in the co-participants' interviews. Central to the co-participants' experiences as women in the field was the importance of having female role models and mentors. All of the co-participants noted having female role models and mentors throughout their career advancement. As one co-participant indicated,

> I did meet (two prominent female sport psychology professionals) as well (at a conference). Both of them were certainly very impressive, very professional women that provided a model.

Another co-participant suggested that,

> I think the early women in the field were very good about supporting each other. People like (list of several prominent female sport psychology professionals). Those are just a handful of them. But I think we had the sense that we were here to support each other and help each other. I think the collegial relationship has been really strong among women. I don't get the sense that it's true among men, but not being a man I don't know that. But I think there's always been a sense of competition between some of the early men in the field and there's a little one downsmanship maybe going on at some point in time.

While all of the co-participants recognized the importance of having and being female role models and mentors, it is also important to note that five of the co-participants had male supervisors and advisors throughout their academic training. One co-participant noted that although her primary supervisor was male, he was considered in her perspective, "the most non-sexist person I ever met in my life." She further stated

that "probably if there was a bias, he's probably more inclined to be woman-oriented, you know, than the good old boy network."

Two of the co-participants discussed the particular importance of having a female support network, especially when working in a male-dominated department. As one co-participant suggested,

> My experience at (University) was a good old boy network and there were actually several of the women who were the more competent scientists. It's funny because for the most of the time I was at (University), there weren't networks of women. We were all just so hard working, but my last few years, there was a group of three of us, three or four of us, that would get together at a place, a social support network to just affirm to one another. That really helped me the last couple of years.

While the co-participants continued to view their role as members of social support networks, as professionals they considered themselves female role models and mentors for young female professionals and students. As one co-participant indicated,

> Mentoring is a role I take very seriously, particularly with female students. Not that I ignore male students - there is just some stuff women aren't socialized with or taught to do. And to be an academician they need to know how to do these things.

One co-participant went further to describe the perceived differences between male and female students, with regard to supervision and mentoring needs.

> I think that there are some differences in mentoring (men and women). I find that women (students) and I was one of them too, are likely to be as competent or even more so, let's say than men. They (women) tend not to think they're as good, kind of underestimating themselves and their true ability. But that's usually a consideration in how I might give feedback or quantity and quality of feedback and the type of advice I'll give that men seem to have been taught somewhere down the line how to be assertive and how to be politically savvy and how to act confident even when they may not be feeling that way. So, I find that when mentoring female students going out into the job market, I might give more definitive advice about what to do to kind of make sure that you succeed.

Another co-participant discussed a debate she and her female students commonly have with regard to recommendations.

> When I talk to our young women graduates I don't get the sense that it's gotten much easier. I think they still feel that there is an old boys network out there that continues to refer men from other men and it doesn't cross the genders very often. I've always tried to refer both my male and female students and give them opportunities, but I've had a couple of students say, 'you know, that's not really fair because men are already only pushing men and if you push men and women equally, they (men) are getting more push.' That's an interesting dilemma which I can't resolve.

While all of the co-participants discussed the meaning and importance of providing social support networks for women, one particular co-participant went further to address the professional women's organizations that provide additional support. As she stated,

> I think we (women) can take advantage of some other organizations that are out there to help us. The Women's Sports Foundation, obviously. I think that we may have the very first president of the year on the International Olympic Committee is a wonderful chance. But the other organizations are the Tucker Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota...You talk about connectedness, I think women tend to weave in much more active ways and ought to continue to utilize that.

While the majority of the discussion regarding female support networks was considered positive and beneficial, one co-participant in particular addressed the need for women and female-dominated groups to not become exclusive. As she stated,

> I do think we need to be a little cautious about (becoming too exclusive). That as we do advocacy for each other, it's easy I think to have these subclusters. You can already see them. A whole bunch of people, who are a very tightly knit group. They need to be careful that doesn't become a world of exclusion so people who come from different perspectives. So far, they're doing a great job of not letting that happen. I don't mean to be critical of them, but it would be easy for that to happen.

Another co-participant suggested that her experience with some female academicians, those outside sport psychology, has not been supportive and positive. Specifically, this co-participant described the competition that existed between her and other female colleagues. As she indicated,

> My success was the problem. I ended up going up for tenure the same year as another (female) colleague and she was ahead of me and although are careers were very similar, and it wasn't that she wasn't doing well. I just perceived it as competition. She always felt she needed to be competitive with me.

Another co-participant addressed this common stereotype of female professionals as being overly competitive with one another. As she stated,

> People often talk about how you don't want to work for a woman or you don't want to be a colleague of a woman because they won't help you along the way. I have never found that to be the case. Yet again, it's one of those stereotypes that sits out there.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide a description of the experiences of women working in the field of sport psychology. Of particular interest was the co-participants' experiences working in the sport domain, any obstacles or barriers they faced throughout career advancement, their alignment within feminism and feminist theory, and their future aspirations and goals as female professionals.

Eight women who were professionals in the field of sport psychology participated in this study. A semi-structured qualitative methodology was used within a feminist perspective and a list of predetermined statements were established prior to conducting the interviews. Additionally, probing questions were used to allow the co-participants to elaborate and/or further explain their responses. An interpretist framework was employed for data analysis (Patton, 1990).

The themes that characterized the co-participants' experiences were: (a) entrance into the field of sport psychology, (b) the context of sport psychology, (c) women's status in sport psychology, (d) obstacles and barriers, (e) the feminist sport psychologist, and (f) supporting women in sport psychology. These themes reflected the co-participants' experiences and perceptions of working in the field of sport psychology.

Discussion

Although one person's experience cannot be generalized to a larger population, Bakhtin (1981) emphasizes the significance of "multiple voices" as "linked and

interrelated, but multiple and diverse in point of views and viewpoints" (p. 43). Each co-participant of this study had a unique perspective. Even so, within the diversity of "point of view and viewpoints" were those "linked and interrelated" threads that represent the commonality of experience among women. In the following sections, similarities and differences between the co-participants' experiences are discussed for each of the themes.

Theme #1: Stumbling into the Profession

Each of the co-participants discussed her "entrance into the field of sport psychology." All of the co-participants entered the field when no "traditional" or "formal" graduate programs in sport psychology existed. Exploration of the history and development of the field of sport psychology reveals that, prior to 1970, very few formalized sport psychology graduate programs existed (Weinberg & Gould, 1995; Williams, 1998). It was not until the late 1970's that formal graduate programs of study began to develop and expand.

Although no formal programs were in place when these women were in school, each of the co-participants took courses in physical education/kinesiology and were exposed to research in the area of sport psychology. In fact, for the majority of the co-participants, it was not until they took a sport psychology course that they realized such a discipline existed.

In addition to taking a sport psychology course, several other factors stimulated the co-participants' interest in and subsequent entrance into the field. Specifically, all of the co-participants participated in sport and physical activity and considered it to be a central aspect of their lives. Moreover, all of the co-participants were interested in the

field due to their personal involvement in sports as coaches and/or athletes. Consistent with the experiences of the co-participants, research has shown that individuals working in the sport domain are more likely to have been involved in sports themselves or sport had been an integral aspect of their adolescence. Consequently, these individuals pursue sport careers because of their love for and personal involvement in such activities (Lavallee & Wylleman, 2000; Petitpas, Champagn, Chartrand, Danish, & Murphy, 1997).

All of the co-participants had prior coaching and athletic experience which directly exposed them to the psychological aspects of sport. As a result, the co-participants became interested in the psychology of sport. A considerable amount of research has shown that coaches, like athletes, are extremely familiar with the mental components of sport (Silva, 1984). In fact today, more than ever, coaches at all levels are beginning to understand and appreciate the importance of enhancing an athlete's and/or team's mental capabilities (Gould, Medbery, Damarjian, & Lauer, 1999). Research has also indicated that very often, an athlete's initial exposure to sport psychology is through the coach and her or his application of certain psychological techniques in sport training (Roper, 1998).

Another factor impacting the co-participants' entrance into the field was the difficulties associated with the coaching profession and the subsequent need for the co-participants to explore "new" career options. It is important to recognize that these co-participants coached women and girls during the 1970's and, while Title IX was passed in 1972, the atmosphere of women's and girls' sports remained challenging, particularly within the coaching profession (Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 2000; Theberge, 1988).

Therefore, such women coaching during the 1960's and 70's often had little support and as a result, opted to pursue new career paths (Coakley, 2001; Therberge, 1988).

Theme #2: The Context of Sport Psychology

Throughout the co-participants' interviews, each described the context of the field of sport psychology. More specifically, the co-participants discussed their perceptions of the field, its progress, and structure.

As teachers and supervisors within the university setting, all of the co-participants were exposed to large numbers of students interested in sport psychology graduate programs. From their experience, the majority of the students interested in sport psychology seem to be attracted to the field for the opportunity to do applied work with athletes and teams, specifically those at the elite-level. Although no research has explored individuals' perceptions of the field of sport psychology, it is possible that due to the "psychological" aspect of the field, the public - and hence potential graduate students - may associate sport psychology only with applied work with athletes and teams rather than with the theoretical work being done in university and college settings. Moreover, considering society's focus on sport, it is also possible that the public associates sport with elite and professional populations; that is, those sport figures that receive the most media attention (Wenner, 1998). As a result, it is possible that the public conception of sport mirrors the dominant images obtained from media reports.

The co-participants in this study also noted that students oftentimes perceived the applied domain as "alluring," "glamorous," and "fast." While the extant literature is silent with respect to such perceptions of the field, it is possible that, due to the automatic

association of sport with elite and professional performers, incoming students, associate sport careers with the "luxurious" lifestyle of high performance athletes and big business sport. However, all of the co-participants suggested that once individuals become established in a graduate program, the majority quickly realize the limited opportunities in applied sport psychology and develop an appreciation of the broader focus of the field.

The majority of the co-participants described their applied interests as "non-traditional" such as working with youth, disabled, elderly, and/or recreational sport populations. Unfortunately, several of the co-participants perceived that the field as a whole places little emphasis on such populations. And, while research and applied work with such populations does occur within the sport psychology context (Asken, 1991; Brustad & Ritter-Taylor, 1997; Clark & Sachs, 1991; Travis & Sachs, 1991), the major emphasis seems to be on the performance of high-level athletes. Interestingly, several of the co-participants who said they worked with "non-traditional" populations, considered their work to be outside the margins and in many ways a loose "fit" within the existing structure of applied sport psychology. A considerable amount of research has suggested that women's academic interests and focus are oftentimes different than those of men's (Caplan, 1995; Toth, 1997). In fact, very often women are more likely to involve themselves in projects and issues that have personal meaning and value as opposed to those that are considered mainstream or "safe" research and/or applied work (Caplan, 1995; Toth, 1997). Unfortunately, such projects and issues do not always "fit" within the male-defined criteria for success in academia (Caplan, 1995; Corrin, 1994; Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999). Therefore, women are oftentimes working in areas that receive very little

emphasis or value and, as the co-participants in this study suggested, their work is "often marginalized and considered less important."

In conjunction with the limited focus of applied sport psychology, the majority of the co-participants noted the lack of diversity and/or the integration of issues of social justice within the existing sport psychological research. Consistent with the observations of these co-participants, Duda and Allison (1990) have noted the dearth of research on the issues of diversity in the field of sport psychology and have urged researchers to begin to incorporate racial make-up and class divisions of subjects/participants into their studies. Duda and Allision also argue that researchers need to begin to explore the impact of their findings on "all" individuals and groups.

Several of the co-participants criticized their primary professional organization, AAASP, for its limited scope. Similar to their previous criticisms of the applied context, they noted the lack of social and cultural awareness within the AAASP organization and its work. The co-participants further commented on the homogenous make-up of AAASP members. Several co-participants discussed the whiteness of the field of sport psychology and, more specifically, the membership of the AAASP organization. Consistent with the views of the co-participants, Butryn (1999) noted the need for professionals in sport psychology to deal openly and critically with white racial identity and privilege and to not underestimate the political implications of their efforts. As Butryn asserts, "the act of critically examining white racial identity and white privilege in sport psychology reaches far beyond the end of a consulting session, and into the everyday experiences of all those who claim citizenship in a diverse world" (p. 33).

While several of the co-participants criticized AAASP for its lack of social and cultural awareness, they applauded increases in the number of feminist and social presentations offered at recent AAASP conferences. However, they observed that still too often the presentations drawing the largest audience fail to integrate the social and cultural context, but rather focus specifically on elite sport performance. As a result, the social and cultural work in sport psychology continues to be a separate area of investigation, rather than a perspective embraced by all researchers. As Brustad and Ritter-Taylor (1997) argue, psychological processes in sport are inextricably linked to the social contexts within which they occur. Research and practice in sport psychology, however, has shown only marginal concern for the social dimensions of participation. Considering that individuals and groups behave differently, it is imperative that social and cultural contexts be incorporated into the production of all knowledge.

One of the co-participants discussed the elitist nature of professional academic associations, and specifically those within the field of sport psychology. Moreover, she criticized the trend to hold conferences at "better sites" and "better hotels," as opposed to places that are more affordable and more conveniently located. She suggested that holding professional conferences at such high profile locations is, by its very nature, elitist and often financially prohibitive, particularly for student members. Proponents of such decisions argue, however, that it is important to take into consideration the growing concern to promote sport psychology as a high profile professional discipline (Gardner, 1991; Silva, 1989). Considering that the field of sport psychology is fairly young, there are some members who contend that its status needs to be advanced (Gardner, 1991;

Silva, 1989). Similar to other developing disciplines, sport psychology has attempted to create a more "professional" atmosphere. Therefore, while one co-participant lamented that the field has adopted the elitist tendencies of other professional disciplines (such as holding conferences at "better sites" and "better hotels"), she acknowledged that some would contend that it has done so in order to demonstrate the field's existence as a professional discipline.

Theme #3: Women's Status in Sport Psychology

All of the co-participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of women's status in the field of sport psychology. Two of them, however, did not consider gender to be a lens through which they experienced or viewed the field. Research has shown that when asked to discuss gender or what it means to "be a woman," women quite often opt to distance themselves from such categories, particularly if "being a woman" is considered disadvantageous (Baumgarder & Richards, 2000; Caplan, 1995; Faludi, 1991).

With regard to women's status in the history of sport psychology, several of the co-participants described the preponderance of male professionals and the relative absence of female professionals found in written accounts. As previously discussed, documentation of women's involvement in the history and development of the field is limited. In 1995, however, Gill explored women's place in the history of sport psychology and noted the work of numerous female scholars in the fields of motor learning, physical education, and psychology. Prior to this time, however, very little attention was devoted to women's contributions. While Gill (1995) attributes many significant contributions to the field's development to women, the majority of papers

devoted to the history of sport psychology fail to acknowledge such contributions. Most often, historical accounts represent the experiences of those individuals who hold power. For "others" such as minorities and women, "special" sections such as "women's history" or "African American history" are the only records that give voice to their historical significance. And, as hooks (1984) argues, very often the most effective way for those in power to maintain power is to silence and/or marginalize all other's experiences and voices. Therefore, in pushing other's history to the margins, greater emphasis and value are placed on "the" history, that is, the history of those in power (hooks, 1984).

All of the co-participants in this study said they felt there were a considerable number of strong female scholars working in the field of sport psychology. Consistent with Gill's (1995) observations, all of the co-participants noted women's professional involvement in organizations and associations, consistent publication records in major sport psychology journals and texts, and visibility as presenters at conferences and as professors in their respective universities.

Each of the co-participants distinguished between the academic and applied context of sport psychology and several noted a greater bias against and exclusion of women within the applied domain. As a result, the co-participants felt that women held less status and/or recognition in the applied domain. They further suggested that, while female consultants do exist, it is oftentimes more difficult for women to obtain consulting positions, particularly with male athletes at the elite levels of sport.

Consistent with the feelings of these co-participants, Roper (in press) argues that all sport populations should have access to sport psychology professionals. Moreover,

Roper notes numerous potential explanations for women's marginalization within the applied context, including the patriarchal nature of sport, association of performance with masculinity, gender role socialization, and lack of female role models in the applied domain.

The co-participants in the present study also discussed women's status in sport psychology organizations and associations such as AAASP, NASPSPA, APA Division 47, and AAHPERD. While all of the co-participants were involved in several organizations, the majority indicated that AAASP was their primary organization. One of the co-participants discussed women's status in AAASP and noted the lack of women within leadership positions prior to 1994. However, all of the co-participants indicated that significant progress had been made in recent years, particularly with regard to gender relations. As addressed in the literature review, examination of the history of AAASP past presidents reveals that, from its inception in 1985 until 1994, this office was held by men. However, since 1994, five women have consecutively held this position.

All of the co-participants discussed their perceived status in the field of sport psychology. However, several were reluctant to discuss their professional accomplishments. In fact, a number suggested that in discussing one's status and accomplishments, people "lose sight of why they love what they do." Research has also shown that women oftentimes downplay their accomplishments and status and in some cases are labeled as having a "fear of success" (Horner, 1972). This may be due to the fact that rejection of successful women, by both men and women, seems to occur most strongly when women act openly competitive and reject traditional feminine roles and

behaviors (Lips, 1999). Society perpetuates stereotypes regarding characteristics it considers acceptably feminine and masculine. Being competent or status-driven has traditionally been considered a masculine quality, one that a woman is not supposed to possess. As a result, women that demonstrate such characteristics are deemed deviant and/or unfeminine (Lips, 1999). Too often, successful women reject their status and/or accomplishments, without recognition of doing so, in order to sustain "femininity" (Horner, 1972; Unger & Crawford, 1992).

In discussing their perceived status in the field, each of the co-participants pointed to such accomplishments as publication records, tenure, administrative rank, editorial positions, and invited speeches. Interestingly, the majority addressed qualities that dealt with their academic success and status. This is consistent with research showing that women, after significant exposure to higher education and its values, begin to behave like men or, more specifically, in ways that are valued and respected within the academy (Caplan, 1995; Gama, 1985).

Theme #4: Obstacles and Barriers

All of the co-participants were asked to talk about any obstacles or barriers they had experienced throughout their career advancement. Interestingly, seven of the co-participants noted that they experienced only "subtle" or "little" barriers. Research has shown that patterns of discrimination are often difficult to see and also very difficult to own. Even when people know that their group as a whole is discriminated against, they often persist in believing that they themselves have never been affected. People often deny that sex bias and discrimination affect them (Unger & Crawford, 1992).

A considerable amount of research has also shown that women, more often than men, diminish or distance themselves from negative experiences or barriers and are more likely to view "others" as the target of "overt" barriers and obstacles (Caplan, 1995, Unger & Crawford, 1992). Researchers suggest that women generally distance themselves from such experiences so as to avoid controversy. Also, many women fear for their future careers and relationships within the workplace and therefore choose to silence themselves. In fact, according to Theodore (1986), few women who fight discrimination encounter victory. Furthermore, it is demoralizing that typically, when complaints are filed, not only is there little change in the organization, but the experience of fighting has a strong negative impact on the protesters, regardless of whether or not they "win" their case. Therefore, consistent with the stance embraced by the co-participants in this study, many women choose to view and approach negative experiences as challenges rather than as barriers (Caplan, 1995).

As previously noted, all of the co-participants distinguished between the applied and academic contexts and the subsequent barriers and obstacles experienced within each. Within academia, each co-participant described a variety of obstacles and barriers, including salary discrepancies, biases associated with hiring practices, the "glass ceiling," family conflict, prescribed gender role stereotyping, homophobia, and "alien" research interests. Although co-participants did not describe all of these obstacles in great detail, it would seem important to explore the context of each of these barriers as it relates to the existing literature.

The salary discrepancy between male and female faculty was noted by several of the co-participants. Consistent with the research showing that women in higher education earn less money than men (Lips, 1999), each co-participant believed that an "unfair" and "unequal" pay structure exists in higher education. Even when men and women are equally qualified and equally experienced, women tend to receive lower salaries. While a narrowing of the salary gap is occurring, the difference between all women's earnings and those of white men remains quite large (Lips, 1999). Within the field of sport psychology, Andersen, Williams, Aldridge, and Taylor (1997) tracked the training and careers of graduate students in sport psychology for a five-year period (1989 to 1994) and found a discrepancy in the earnings of men and women at both the master's and doctoral degree levels, with males earning more than females. These results are consistent with those obtained by Waite and Pettit (1993), which indicated that males in general earn 33% more than their female counterparts.

Several of the co-participants described the "subtle" barriers associated with hiring practices and job searches. One of the co-participants in particular suggested that while job searches are oftentimes advertised as "open," the "good old boys" network still operates in powerful ways. A considerable amount of research has shown that unwritten rules give members of a search committee great leeway with respect to how various items on the curriculum vitae of any particular female or male applicant are evaluated. More specifically, what may oftentimes be described as a good "fit" may have more to do with a candidate's social privilege. Too often the term "fit" is associated with a person's research interests, personality, and ability to blend well with faculty members (Caplan,

1995). However, as Morley (1994) suggests, men are more likely to "fit" within the existing structure of academia than women due to their inherent privilege.

One of the co-participants discussed the effect of affirmative action on her own hiring and indicated that several male candidates felt she had been "given" her appointment because of her gender. Research has shown that affirmative action policies exist for the purpose of assisting employers in developing positive steps to eliminate discrimination in the workplace. As a result of the widespread misunderstanding of affirmative action policies, many people believe it is difficult for white males to get jobs and that unqualified women and minorities are being hired instead. As a significant amount of research suggests, there is a tendency for men's and women's levels of success to be evaluated differently. Moreover, a misperception of affirmative action policies leads many people to assume that women have their jobs not because they deserve them, but because they have received preferential hiring treatment (Sapiro, 1992).

One of the co-participants discussed the maintenance of prescribed gender roles. More specifically, this woman described a specific instance when her choice of attire, that is, choosing not to wear a skirt, was questioned within the workplace. As Hatt, Kent, and Britton (1999) suggest, when women stray from prescribed gender roles such as not wearing feminine clothing or behaving "unfeminine," they are often labeled as "deviant" or are accused of "not being a woman." Such gender role stereotyping is used to maintain the existing power structure that privileges men and discriminates against women, particularly women who do not subscribe to such "feminine" gender roles (Messner & Sabo, 1990).

Only one co-participant indicated that she was openly homosexual. Oftentimes lesbians, or women perceived to be lesbian, face discrimination based on their sexual orientation. Such individuals may be fired, not hired, or not promoted due to stereotypes and/or erroneous assumptions about lesbians (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988). However, this particular co-participant described experiencing very little discrimination in her professional life. In fact, she indicated that she felt "embraced and welcomed" as a lesbian by most members of the sport psychology community. However, it is important to recognize that homophobic forces often act to silence and closet lesbians (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988). Moreover, although this particular co-participant may have faced very little discrimination within the sport psychology and academic communities, she may have represented a "token" of sorts. Tokenism refers to the practice of people who make only a token effort to desegregate their numbers. In the case of a lesbian academician, it is possible that promoting and/or "accepting" only one open lesbian is a form of tokenism within some academic departments (Kane & Stagl, 1991; Older, 1995).

While all of the co-participants felt that their research was respected and valued within the field of sport psychology, two noted the need for individuals to be cautious when attempting to earn tenure. That is, one needed to be certain that her work was "acceptable" within her respective institution. One co-participant who is currently conducting research on "controversial" topics, admitted that she opted to conduct "safe" research for the first five years of her professional career. However, once she had established herself as a researcher within the field and had obtained tenure, she began to conduct research in areas that personally interested her, regardless of whether they

represented "mainstream" topics or not. Very often, women in research experience "tokenism" if the particular topics they study are outside the mainstream interests of the majority of faculty (Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999). Also, while each institution has different standards and requirements for earning tenure and promotion, research and one's publication record are highly regarded. The type of research being conducted and the sources in which the studies are published are also important factors taken into consideration by tenure review committees. If the research is considered "unacceptable," individuals will have difficulty earning tenure and promotion. The available evidence suggests that research conducted by women is oftentimes less valued within academia and when this is the case, women may face a considerable amount of difficulty earning tenure (Caplan, 1995; Hatt, Kent, & Britton, 1999; Toth, 1997).

Several of the co-participants discussed the difficulty they faced maintaining a family and a career simultaneously. Consistent with the experiences of these co-participants, research has shown that most working women experience role conflict. Role conflict is defined as the psychological effects of being faced with two or more sets of incompatible expectations or demands. Moreover, it is likely that multiple roles have different consequences for women and men in the workplace. Men's primary family responsibility - to be a "good provider" - is compatible with being heavily involved in their work roles (Bernard, 1981), while women's primary responsibilities as parent, emotional nurturer, and housekeeper, are not.

One of the co-participants discussed the stereotypes that are commonly associated with female consultants. They included women's "inability to maintain confidentiality"

and "lack of sport knowledge." While this particular co-participant was aware of the falsity of such stereotypes, she also recognized the fact of their existence and their maintenance within society.

In 1991, Yambor and Connelly examined the issues confronting female sport psychology consultants and argued that women were at a distinct disadvantage in the applied domain because of their gender. The authors addressed several societal stereotypes and attitudes that represented potential barriers for females attempting to deliver mental skills training. More specifically, the authors discussed the importance of confidentiality in consulting situations and suggested that the issue of confidentiality may be viewed differently by male and female consultants. Interestingly, one co-participant suggested that, from her experience, it was often male consultants that publicly disclosed the names of individuals they were working with. Confidentiality may not necessarily have been broken in such cases, since many consultants receive the approval of the athletes to publicly use their name. However, this particular co-participant suggested that, from her experience, female consultants were more likely to respect the confidentiality of the athlete-consultant relationship. Due to the lack of such "name-dropping," this individual suspected that very few people were aware of the numbers of high-level athletes she consistently worked with.

Another barrier one of the co-participants discussed was not specific to gender, but rather to the need for both female and male consultants to prove their knowledge of sport. Yambor and Connelly (1991) suggest that female consultants' sport knowledge is often called into question, whereas men's knowledge is assumed. However, one

particular co-participant said she experienced no differential treatment with regard to sport knowledge, with the exception of work with men's teams where few female consultants have been able to gain access. It remains possible that, just as in other sport-related professions (e.g., athletic training, sport journalism), female sport psychology consultants may face difficulty gaining acceptance with and access to men's teams and male athletes. While there are numerous stereotypes and assumptions preventing women from entering such male frontiers, it is important that sport not exclude and marginalize women from working with "other" populations. Moreover, there is a need to critically challenge the existing stereotypes and attitudes that prevent women from entering such contexts.

Several of the co-participants discussed men's "face validity" in the sport domain. Moreover, they asserted that due to men's privileged status in sport, men's credibility is less likely to be called into question within the applied domain. In 1996, Petrie, Cogan, Van Raalte, and Brewer examined the potential of a gender bias in sport psychology and addressed men's "face validity" in the world of sport. These authors also recommended that men, due to their social privilege in sport, might assist women in gaining access. McIntosh (1988) argues that men not only need to recognize that women are disadvantaged but need to "unpack" their own unearned privilege. In doing so, men might be better positioned to work alongside women to create change within the field of sport as a whole.

Theme #5: The Feminist Sport Psychologist

All of the co-participants considered themselves to be feminists. However, most were hesitant to say what "being a feminist" meant to them. In fact, several of the co-participants indicated that while they considered themselves feminists, they experienced great difficulty reconciling themselves with the feminist label.

A considerable amount of research has explored individual's, particularly women's, attachment to the "feminist" label. Due to the backlash often associated with the word "feminism," many women (and men) feel less inclined to attach the feminist label to themselves. Because of the association of feminism with lesbianism and with extreme behavior, the general public tends to distance itself from the concept. However, distancing oneself from the feminist label is exactly the reason why such images of feminism are portrayed in the media. It is yet another example of the patriarchal dominance that exists within society.

Research has shown that women and the feminist movement are discredited by the media (Faludi, 1997). Focusing on the bizarre and the threatening, the media oftentimes uses the extreme forms of feminism, and those that are controversial, to distance the public from the feminist cause. Therefore, many women and men view the feminist label as not only negative, but also as unrepresentative of themselves. It is also important to recognize that the co-participants in this study were initially exposed to feminism during the 1960's and 1970's; a time when extreme feminist activity was occurring. Therefore, it is possible that these women associate feminism with more radical activity, like the bra-burning of the 1970's. The oldest co-participant suggested that while she considered her

behavior to be feminist in nature, she preferred not to use the feminist label. For this individual, the "feminist" label seemed somewhat foreign, as the term did not exist during her generation.

While there were some differences with regard to co-participants' acceptance of feminism, each discussed a variety of ways in which her actions were feminist. For instance, several described the need to create liberating ways of teaching and particularly to promote the classroom as a "safe" place in which students feel open to share and discuss all issues and topics. Additionally, some considered the notion of collaboration to be feminist in nature. Research suggests that one of the most obvious ways to establish a more feminist working environment is to engage in collaborative work (Weiler, 1988). Consistent with the notion of collaboration, one particular co-participant described her once-held position as a journal editor as feminist - in much the same way as she viewed her role as a mentor - rather than in terms of the traditional hierarchical relationship oftentimes associated with the journal review process.

For several of the co-participants, being involved in women's studies departments, women's organizations, and developing gender specific courses in sport and physical education were considered to be examples of feminist behavior. One particular co-participant mentioned the display of feminist posters and bumper stickers that lined her office walls and door. Research suggests that people's offices say a great deal about the individuals who inhabit them and, more specifically, that individual's values. For the feminist, displaying feminist slogans is oftentimes an attempt to vocalize controversial

topics and issues (Mitchell & Oakley, 1986). In many ways, such publicity represents one form of activism.

While not all of the co-participants chose to use the feminist label, all provided a definition of what being a feminist meant to them. Of the co-participants who provided a distinct definition, most listed characteristics of liberal feminism such as equality between women and men, advocacy for women and girls, and political/legal progress such as Title IX. Two of the co-participants discussed the need for change and action-oriented research which is consistent with the notion of feminist praxis discussed by Hall (1996).

When discussing the use of the word feminist it is important to recognize again the era in which the majority of the co-participants were raised and educated. Most of the co-participants were educated during the 1960's and 1970's and were initially introduced to feminism during the second wave of its history. As discussed in the literature review, a primary focus of second wave feminism is equality and legal reform. Therefore, it is understandable that the majority of the co-participants in this study would align themselves within a liberal feminist perspective. Interestingly, the youngest co-participant was the only woman to discuss radical forms of change and the need to reform and reconstruct the existing structure of society.

A common critique of second wave feminist work is that it fails to take into consideration the complexity of oppression and that it focuses too much on white, heterosexual, middle-upper class women (hooks, 1984). However, all of the co-participants in this study noted the need to take into consideration issues of social justice such as race, class, sexual orientation, age and ability, among other identities. Consistent

with the views of the co-participants, a considerable amount of feminist research has noted the need to continue to expand the category of "woman" and to recognize its complexity (Dewar, 1993; hooks, 1984).

Theme #6: Supporting Women in Sport Psychology

All of the co-participants discussed the importance of mentoring and social support networks for women. This view is in line with a great deal of research that supports the need for women to develop social support groups, particularly when women are isolated within a male-dominated context (Caplan, 1995).

Each of the co-participants discussed the importance of having female mentors and role models in the field. All noted that they had learned from numerous exceptional women throughout their career development. As researchers have suggested, women role models and mentors play important functions for students and young professionals. These functions include serving as examples of what is possible for women, learning the unwritten rules of the profession, and providing individualized tutoring and attention (Caplan, 1995). More specifically, role models are members of one's own reference group who are visibly successful (Yoder, Adams, Grove, & Priest, 1985). Just knowing that other women have managed to overcome obstacles to success may help the newcomer deal with her own conflicts and prepare for the challenges she will be facing. There is also some evidence that female graduate students who have female professors as role models are more career-oriented, confident, and satisfied with their student role than those who have male role models (Gilbert, Galessich, & Evans, 1983).

The present co-participants discussed the increased need to view themselves as role models and mentors for young female professionals and graduate students. Very often, as research suggests, female academicians, particularly those that have reached the higher ranks, understand the isolated nature of academia for women. Therefore, experienced women professionals are eager and willing to provide support and guidance for younger women (Caplan, 1995; Toth, 1997).

The co-participants also discussed the differences associated with mentoring female and male students. Several observed that female students often have not been "trained" or introduced to the unwritten rules of academia. Also, consistent with the experiences of these co-participants, researchers have found that female students are generally less confident and self-assured than male students (Caplan, 1995; Toth, 1997). Therefore, female students may require different forms of mentoring and supervision than male students (Toth, 1997).

One of the co-participants also discussed the competitiveness she experienced with several female faculty members in academe as a whole. This particular co-participant's experience of competition between women represents a common stereotype. Applied to academia, Caplan (1995) suggests, "there is so little power and praise given to the academic woman that, too often, we fight over it" (Caplan, 1995, p.85). She further suggested that as members of a less powerful group, women are at risk of turning their frustrations on each other, rather than recognizing that women are often each other's best potential allies.

It is also important to discuss the homophobic forces that exist in society and more specifically within academia. As indicated by this particular co-participant, the women that she received the most hostility and competition were from those who were other lesbians in the academy. Consistent with her experiences, research suggests that closeted lesbians, due to their fear of being "outed" or "exposed," attempt to distance themselves from lesbianism (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988). In fact, as research suggests, closeted lesbians may feel resentment and anger towards women who are open lesbians (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988).

While all of the co-participants discussed the importance of associating themselves with other women in the field, one expressed admiration for her male supervisor, whom she characterized as particularly non-sexist. Several of the co-participants also described very positive experiences with male supervisors and mentors. With this said, it is important to acknowledge the role of men within the feminist perspective, as much third wave feminist literature does (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000). Unfortunately, feminists, particularly as represented in the media, are too often portrayed as man-hating, men-bashing women (Faludi, 1991). However, third wave feminists would argue that patriarchy, the system of oppression that privileges men is the chief problem, rather than men themselves. In fact, in many ways society is constructed in a manner that is oppressive towards some men, particularly those who do not subscribe to the accepted ethos of masculinity (Faludi, 1999). Too often, people's images of feminism do not include men. And, as a feminist myself, consistent with many third wave feminists (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000), I believe that men must play an

important role in the feminist agenda. Also, I would argue that feminism, regardless of one's strand, has the potential to broaden society's acceptance of those behaviors and activities that fall outside prescribed gender roles. Therefore, while feminism focuses on advocacy for women, there is also great potential for feminism to benefit men.

Summary

The findings of this study suggest that there are similarities as well as differences in the experiences of the co-participants of this study. Moreover, the issues that emerged within their experiences correspond with several themes identified in the extant literature. Despite these threads, the dearth of literature relative to personal experiences of women working in sport psychology needs to be addressed. Additionally, the link between women's work experiences and their career development within the larger context of sport psychology and society has implications for the future of the field of sport psychology.

Recommendations

As indicated throughout this study, the perceptions and experiences of the co-participants of this study cannot be generalized to all women in the field of sport psychology. However, the concerns and experiences of these eight co-participants suggest several themes for future research.

While exploring women's experiences in the field is necessary, it is also important to not only focus on the experiences of those that have reached the "advanced" levels of the field but also on those who have not reached the "advanced" levels. More

specifically, women could be interviewed who are not in high-level academic positions or who may have left the field of sport psychology for various reasons.

The co-participants of this study were introduced to the field of sport psychology in several different ways. For most, however, their involvement in sport served as the initial impetus that impacted their decision to enter the field. It is therefore important to continue to investigate women's entrance into the field of sport psychology as women's participation in sport continues to grow, especially as witnessed in the past 20 years (Coakley, 2001).

With regard to the context of sport psychology, further research is needed to explore gender biases in the field of applied sport psychology. Also, as people's interest in the applied field continues to grow, it is important that students and professionals realize the reality of the applied world. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the availability of applied opportunities for both men and women. In addition, researchers need to explore the potential gender bias that exists within the applied context and determine ways to bring about change. There is also a need to explore ways to broaden the traditional meaning of applied sport psychology to incorporate "non-traditional" forms of applied work, such as work with youth, disabled, and elderly populations.

While the present study was necessary, particularly as it was the first to explore women's experiences in the academic discipline of sport psychology, it is important that efforts such as this continue as the field of sport psychology continues to change and advance. Also, future researchers need to better document the history of sport psychology

by incorporating women's "voices" and experiences into historical record. Therefore, future studies, articles, and texts need to not only focus on the men that have shaped the development of the field, but also on the extraordinary women and their numerous contributions. In doing so, a more valid and comprehensive representation of the history and development of the field should emerge.

While the co-participants in this study discussed numerous obstacles and barriers, it is important to recognize that the majority of those pertaining to academic involvement are not specific to the field of sport psychology, but rather to the culture of academia. Therefore, there is a need to continue to challenge and critique the discriminatory practices that occur within academia as a whole.

It is also important that leaders in the field of sport psychology continue to discuss the significance of integrating feminism and sport psychology. Moreover, it is necessary that the field begins to broaden its definitions of feminism to incorporate more radical perspectives. As previously argued, a feminist approach sport psychology has the potential to broaden what it means to be a "sport psychologist." It is also important for the field to continue to explore the overwhelming whiteness and lack of diversity that exists and to provide opportunities for all people.

The importance of social support networks was an important theme of these co-participants' interviews. For these women, associating themselves with other female professionals was integral to their advancement in the field. Therefore, further investigation is needed to explore the mentoring process and the needs of female students and professionals, as they may be somewhat different than those of males. Also, it may

be beneficial if sport psychology organizations and associations, such as AAASP, would begin to develop mentoring programs for both female and male students in order to allow them the opportunity to interact and socialize with a broader range of professionals. Just as AAASP has special interest groups (SIG) devoted to areas like diversity issues, performance enhancement, and qualitative research, it may be beneficial to develop a SIG devoted to women's issues.

Lastly, when conducting a study such as this, it is important to recognize the personal nature of the findings. And, while the present findings are not generalizable to all women working in sport psychology, it is important that their experiences and perceptions be taken very seriously. Too often, women's issues become marginalized and deemed less important. Therefore, an important aspect of this study is to emphasize the significance of the co-participants "voices" and experiences. As Adrienne Rich (1979) states, "when those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark skinned, old, disabled, female...when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes a world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic equilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing." This quote reflects Rich's concern with being inclusive in teaching in general, but it could be applied just as well to researchers and practitioners in sport psychology. And, by acknowledging those individuals who have been silenced and misrepresented, the field of sport psychology will begin to move towards developing an engendered and multicultural discipline with opportunity for all interested and qualified individuals.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me about your experience of when you initially entered the field of sport psychology.

2. Talk to me about any obstacles or barriers that you have experienced throughout your career advancement.

3. What is your perception of women's status in the field of sport psychology?

4. What does "being a feminist" mean to you and do you consider yourself to be a feminist?

5. Talk to me about your future aspirations and goals as a female professional in the field.

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Co-Participant:

My name is Emily Roper and I am a third year Ph.D. student in Sport Psychology at the University of Tennessee working under the supervision of Dr. Craig Wrisberg and Dr. Leslee Fisher. I am in the process of submitting my dissertation proposal with the hope of investigating the experiences of pioneering women who have reached advanced levels in the field of Sport Psychology.

I would be honored to have the opportunity to interview you regarding your career experiences and work history. I would ask you about specific factors that stimulated your entrance into the field, your personal experiences working in the sport domain, and any obstacles and/or barriers you faced throughout your career advancement. In addition, I would ask you about your future aspirations and goals as a female professional working in the field. The interview would last approximately 45-60 minutes and would be audiotaped and then transcribed. The interview would be conducted by one of the following means: (1) at the annual AAASP conference in Nashville, (2) at your location, in which case we would arrange a date and time at your convenience, or (3) by telephone.

All results from the interview would be confidential. Because confidentiality is an important issue, several measures would be undertaken. You can be assured that all discussions taking place during the interviews would be kept private and confidential. Also, your actual name would not be used on the transcribed interviews, nor would it appear when the results are described in the written manuscript; a pseudonym would be assigned to you. Furthermore, no one but myself would have access to the audiotaped information. The audiotaped interviews would be stored in a locked file cabinet in my office until May, 2001 to allow adequate time for interview transcription. After this, the tapes would be destroyed.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you. If you agree to take part, you may stop at any time.

If you want to know more information regarding this research project please call me at (865) 974-8768 (Office) or (865) 524-7565 (Home). This project has been approved by the Human Subject's Review Board at the University of Tennessee. If you have any questions regarding the University of Tennessee's regulations for research, please call (865) 974-3466.

Respectfully,

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
CULTURAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION

I acknowledge that the research procedures described on the attached form have been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed of all procedures in the study. I know that I may ask, now, or in the future, any questions I have about the study or the research procedures. I have been assured that records relating to me will be kept confidential and no information will be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity without my permission. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time.

_____ _____

(Signature of Co-Participant) (Name of Co-Participant)

_____

(Date)

APPENDIX C

DEMORAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the following questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope supplied.

1. What is your age?

2. Where do you currently reside (city and state)?

3. How long have you lived there?

4. Was your move there connected with your current sport psychology position in any way?

5. What is your ethnic background?

_____Black/African American	_____White/European
_____Asian/Pacific Islander	_____Native American
_____Chinese/Chinese American	_____Alaskan Native
_____Japanese/Japanese American	_____Hispanic

6. How many sisters do you have?
   How many older than you?
   How many younger than you?

7. How many brothers do you have?
   How many older than you?
   How many younger than you?

8. Do you have a significant other/partner/spouse?
   For how long?
   Do you have any children?
   If so, what are their ages and genders?

9. How many hours per day do you spend in your job(s)? Briefly describe.

10. How much money do you make per year in your full-time sport psychology position?

11. How much money do you make per year in applied sport psychology consulting?

12. Did you participate in sports when you were younger? List the sports that you participated in and the level for each age bracket.
    Age 1-5 years
    Age 6-11 years
    Age 12-14 years
    Age 15-18 years
    Age 19-22 years
    Age 23-30 years
    Age 31-40 years
    Age 41 and up

13. What does being a sport psychologist mean to you?

14. Is there anything that I didn't ask you that you think is important?

Thank you for your participation!
If you have any further questions please contact me at (865) 524-7565 or eroper@utk.edu

VITA

Emily A. Roper was born in Mt.Vernon, Ohio, on August 16, 1974. She attended Grove City High School and graduated in 1992. Emily earned her bachelor of science in psychology from Kent State University in 1996.

From 1996-1998, Emily was a master's student specializing in sport psychology at the University of Toronto. Upon earning her master's degree, Emily entered the doctoral program at the University of Tennessee, in which she specialized in sport psychology.

As sport psychology is located within the area of Cultural Studies in Education at the University of Tennessee, Emily began to focus on women's issues in sport based on her personal experience and perceptions as a woman working in the field of sport psychology. Emily received her Doctor of Philosophy degree, graduating summa cum laude, with a major emphasis in Sport and Exercise Psychology in August, 2001.